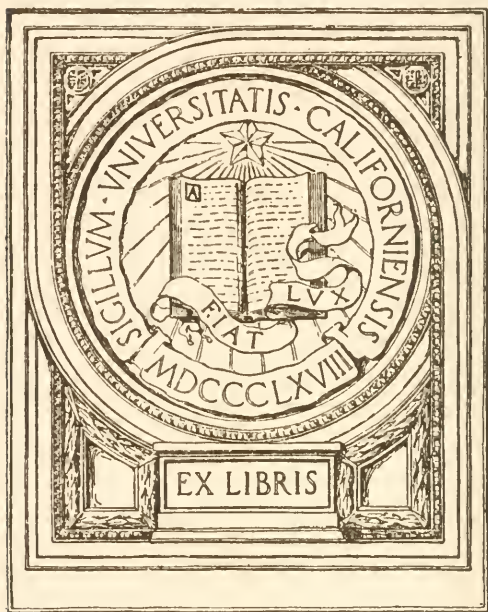


THE NEW DEATH

WINIFRED KIRKLAND



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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By

WINIFRED KIRKLAND



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1637

TO MY FATHER

1843-1917

THE NEW DEATH

WE are accustomed in these days to hear many ancient things called new. New Thought, New Poetry, New Religion, are terms which, when stripped of their faddist connotation, can honestly claim a novelty of approach in regard to these three oldest of spiritual activities. By an analogous use of the word "new," one may direct attention to the change in standards that is being wrought in everyday living by the present concentration upon death. Never before in history has death been so prominent a fact. Always before it has been possible to avoid thinking about it. To-day no one can escape the constant presence, before his mind, of dissolution. The most casual concerns flash forth at unexpected moments in startling focus against the present holocaust of ruin. No one can forget them, no one can get away from them, those boys dead upon the battle-fields of Europe. We are used to

speaking of this or that friend's philosophy of life; the time has come when every one who is to live at peace with his own brain must possess also a philosophy of death. The enigma of the young dying by the thousands, the millions, is as insistent for the humblest as for the most intellectual thinker; it is universal. There is not one of us who has not thought more about death within the last four years than in a whole lifetime before, and by their very intensity our thoughts are new. Contemporary publications of every sort are prolific in evidence of the focusing of the popular mind upon death, but this preoccupation is a force too fresh to be easily formulated, while already it is so pervasive and so profound in its effect upon the motives and the standards which must both sustain a world in agony and rebuild it for the future, that the psychologist may well term this naked intimacy with facts formerly avoided, the New Death.

It is probably more by its poignancy than by its numbers that death has shocked

us into this novel realization of its importance. If the European harvest had reaped old men, however many, rather than young, the challenge for explanation would not have been so stinging. Concerning the extinction of the old, we should have felt as we do about the sequence of blossom, fruitage, decay, and seed — always seed. We should have had the reassurance of an ordered economy perceived as rational: the old, dying, had had their opportunity, had served their purpose. For their passing, we should not have had to remake our thinking; we should have grieved a little and gone on about our business. The only way in which death could exact from us its due consideration was to break our hearts with pity and baffle our brains with wastage. It may be that the enigma of the youth of the world destroyed is insoluble, but the New Death, this unprecedented readiness at last to look into the unseen, is the effort of popular thought to translate pity into motive, and bewildering waste into a reconstructed relationship to spiritual values.

Not alone by the youth of its victims has

the war horrified us into a new adjustment to death, but by their type. The shining best are those most surely sacrificed. Those that might have been our leaders, — painters, scholars, scientists, statesmen, poets, — and those others so-called “humbler,” who might have brought new vision, new fellowship into the ranks of labor, — the passionate idealists of every class and kind, — these are the youths the war has taken and will take. For a long time we in the United States felt the suffering chiefly in imagination only. Not even yet have we thought so deeply about the mystery as have the other nations, but, God knows, we shall presently be thinking! Premonitions of our new spiritual insight came to us when first we watched the set faces of our own boys as they marched to their fate. How can the world spare its best before they have lived to bless it? What is the meaning of the frenzy with which the universe blasts its benefactors? And what is the significance of the strange, the well-nigh occult, reassurance without which we could not “carry on” the ideals they have

left us in the face of such utter prodigality of destruction? What is this grave the world was coming in its heart and in its daily practices more and more to treat as final?

Many of us know that spot in Washington where, remote even in the "crowded loneliness" of those many graves, there sits a bronze figure of mystery. For a few hurried moments of sight-seeing, we have paused, awed and dumb. Not the most smug among us has seen that face and not questioned it, then we have stepped forth from the cypresses and gone back by the clanging cars to the cheerful hurly-burly of our little busy hours. Now it is as if that seated statue had been placed in every house. Perhaps we veil it with a curtain, but always we feel it there, obtruding on our most casual affairs its stern, strange presence. Some humble household impertunity every now and then twitches aside the curtain, unveiling that face of enigma, silent, looking steadily — into what? All over the world it is the same, in a million homes that baffling and majestic shape. It

seems, as we gaze at that statue, as if it were seated before a familiar door, through which some dear boy has suddenly vanished, some actual living laughing boy, our own now, bearing some name precious to our sobbing lips. That half the world is asking of that shrouded form, "Where has he gone, and why?" makes all life tremulous with a new inquiry. When every one is asking the same question, may it not be that the answers, still hesitant, still experimental, may bring into being a new adaptation of living to dying, a New Death?

It is not always that the popular mind moves in advance of accredited intellectual leaders, but it appears that to-day the common people have become their own prophets, that a belief in personal survival is becoming so strong an influence in thousands of humble and bereaved homes that it would seem as if novelists and psychologists should reckon with it as an important phase of the contemporary, however little they accept it as a philosophy for themselves. Scientists and philosophers are still honestly agnostic, but they should beware

of any longer attributing their own creed to people at large. By very wistfulness of grief, current thought is being influenced in practical ways by the possibility of immortality as never before in history. Yet Mr. Galsworthy writes: "Not one Englishman in ten now really believes that he is going to live again"; and of the French, "The *poilu* has no faith at all now, if he ever had, save faith in his country."

One wonders if it is conceivable that Mr. Galsworthy has read the many brief, immortal credos of the many Englishmen who have left us their breathless, blotted memoirs of the trenches, or has been deaf to the triumph songs of parents who have survived them, or that he can fail to have been stirred by the flaming faith of the young soldiers of France. These soldier-writers say, and surely they were intimate enough to know, that they merely voice the inarticulate convictions of ten thousand humbler comrades. Whatever our personal beliefs, indurated by lifelong habit, we are strangely stupid if we are not startled by the overwhelming evidence of the present

centering of the general attention upon the possibilities of survival.

If we look, not to the theorists in fiction, philosophy, or science, but to that instant, living register of the contemporary, the newspaper or the magazine, we find convincing corroboration. The following is not the sort of thing that four years ago we should have prophesied from any war correspondent. It is from the pen of Charles Grasty, writing from England to the "New York Times":—

"One of the best-read columns in the newspapers in these melancholy days is that devoted to deaths and *in memoriam* notices. They bring home the sentimental and spiritual side of this terrible conflict. Bereaved relatives pay tribute to their dead and give public expression to their grief who in the old days would have shrunk from breaking their reserve on subjects regarded as private and sacred. The effect of this community expression is to set in the very midst of commonplace, workaday life the beautiful thought of immortality."

In another issue of the same journal, the editor of a popular woman's magazine speaks of her "realization of the fact that every one, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, has a craving for knowledge of life after death; has a craving for belief in life after death. And the war has raised this feeling to the *n*th power; we feel that we shall go mad if there is no hereafter."

Still another writes: "Not for a century has interest in the great themes of death, immortality, and the life everlasting been so widespread and so profound. The war has made a new heaven, let us trust that it may aid in making a new earth."

The attention of the popular mind to death is not only at variance with the attitude of the accepted leaders of thought, but is contradictory to its own attitude of only a few years ago, when death was still the isolated, not the average, experience of the average person. In the old days the bereaved was a little apart, a little abnormal. We were always glad when our friends set aside their mourning and became

again like the rest of us. For an every-day man or woman, death was a subject a little indecorous, had a little of the old Hebrew abhorrence which made the Jews regard its presence as a defilement of their Pass-over; yet it was a young man's dying that, in the history of religion, re-created that Passover by the promise of a resurrection.

We of this country are now only beginning the new investigation of mortality, but in the other nations this investigation is already potent in its practical effects. That the first manifested result is a serenity as yet inexplicable even to its possessors has a significance that intrigues our divination, and contains possibilities for the human spirit not yet to be prophesied.

"Though the Abhorred taketh the groom, and to
the bride hath sent

The dagger of anguish with the ice-cold hilt,
Both of them triumph in a strange content —

And out of souls like these will heavens be built
And holy cities peopled for the Lord."

Thus an English father, who has lost two sons in the war, glimpses the possibilities of the new enforced familiarity with

fate, which varies, according to the individual, all the way from uneasiness at the intrusion of the spiritual upon his smugness to an absorption so engrossing that some of us feel that we cannot go on living one day longer until we have decided what is the relation of dying to every hour of existence. In terms of immediate living, the New Death is the constant influence upon us of the boys who have passed. All the ramifications of experience and of endeavor growing out of our attitude toward our young dead must become a new psychological factor in the world's thought and action. The whole subject is still as formless as it is forceful, but it is already possible to analyze some of its obvious characteristics and to conjecture some possible results to public life and to private thinking. Like many other felt but not yet formulated influences of the war, the potentialities of the New Death are still to be discovered, as, led by grief, the souls of survivors seek to penetrate the path whither so imperiously the splendid young dead compel our thoughts.

The new attitude toward dissolution can be clarified by comparing it with the attitude of other ages toward the age-old fact. We must remember always that the point of view under scrutiny is not that of the philosophers, but that of the people; that we are seeking humbly to penetrate the profundities of a plain man's thinking, whether that plain man is a sturdy Greek farmer whose Homer is his Bible, or a young British stevedore with no Bible at all. Greek life was more influenced by the man in the street than by the philosopher, just as to-day the after-the-war world will be more affected by Tommy from the trenches than by Mr. Galsworthy or Mr. Wells. In every period the most powerful influence upon the living present has been the every-day attitude of every-day men and women toward dying. The Greek felt the physical life as so vivid and busy and beautiful that he had small imagination left with which to prefigure post-mundane existence. The average Greek gave credence to personal survival, but in a region that was neither a heaven nor a hell, but

merely a pallid reflection of earthly experience. The futile ghosts retained their individuality, but only as they wistfully re-lived their mortal course. The ancient world, rejoicing in sunshine and strength, had only pity for the poor shade, "who had now no steadfast strength nor power at all in moving, such as was aforetime in his supple limbs." The highest honors of the spirit world are only a pale repetition of the honors of the physical.

Nothing could be in clearer contrast to the ancient than the medieval standpoint, persisting with certain changes of shape into the Puritan. The conception was the ascetic, the depreciation of all physical life. The body was the degrading, the purely disciplinary, vesture of the spirit. This world was but the sordid vestibule of the next. Yet, ironically enough, the medieval imagination was not much more inventive than the ancient in its pictures of immortality. The life after death, instead of being a denuded reproduction of previous existence, was a glorious ideal-

ization of it, reflecting in its imperial hierarchy of spirits the worldly hierarchies of Church and State. The medieval mind was as firmly convinced as the Hellenic of its ability to establish every detail of the unknown and unknowable existence beyond the grave. The Greek exalted the present at the expense of the future, the medieval man exalted the future at the expense of the present, both with equal conviction and both with equal, though opposed, effects upon contemporary history.

The modern view of death, the scientific, the agnostic, differs from both the ancient and the medieval, except that perhaps its confidence that we can know nothing of life after death is as arrogant as the confidence of past ages that we can know everything. The medieval believer exalted immortality, the Greek debased it, but neither lived as if it were not; neither the ancient nor the medieval world could have been called materialistic. We moderns have also lived our creed of death, with all its results to present history. In policies and practices, in public morality and

in personal, every nation has been infected by materialism. The Germans have been more logical, more obedient to the dicta of science, than the rest of us, but it can hardly be denied that one's philosophy of death is the most decisive element in one's philosophy of life, if one stops to conjecture the difference in current events if the Germans, as a nation, had believed in the personal survival after slaughter of their own sons, or of others'.

The New Death, now entering history as an influence, is not Greek nor medieval nor modern. It is so far mainly an immense yearning receptivity, an unprecedented humility of both brain and heart toward all the implications of survival. It is a great intuition entering into the lives of the simple, the sort of people who have made the past and will make the future. It does not matter in the least whether or not the intellectuals share this intuition, and it does not matter whether or not the intuition is true, or whether future generations, returned to the lassitude of peace, shall again deny the present perceptions;

what matters is the effect upon emergent public life and private of the fact that every-day men and women are believing the dead live.

These every-day men and women are not looking to their former teachers, the scientist and the theologian, for light upon death. In the urgency of grief we turn instinctively to more authoritative solace than either of these is able to promise. Before 1914 we had seen the disestablishment of the Church as an unquestioned arbiter; since 1914 we have seen the disestablishment of science as an unquestioned arbiter. We have seen what happens to people whom science commands, so that we can never again feel our old trust in its dicta. And what has science to say about our young men dead? What comfort does it offer for their extinction or our own? Only the hideous revelation that it is science itself that is destroying the civilization which science itself built up. Even at this hour science is as deaf to the prophet voices of the people as is orthodoxy. Science has its Pharisaism of reason matching the Phari-

saism of religion, but pride of intellect is precisely the German disease that all the world has gone forth to eradicate.

Through all this testing by tragedy, however, we still pay science this much of respect: we continue to practice its methods, while we no longer give blind acquiescence to its conclusions. In the immense desolation of grief to-day, the authority both of the religion and of the science of yesterday grows faint, and to the enigma of that inexorable shape now present at every hearth-side, each person must find his own answer. For this intellectual initiative the common man is far better prepared than he knew. Widespread education, widespread communication, has equipped the popular mind for mental achievement that materialism had diverted to grosser directions than it deserved. Universal sorrow has now cleared a path for its progress. This new moral earnestness can be observed in relation to many present problems, but nowhere more clearly than in its application to the supreme present problem, death. Science, permeating the com-

monest education, has given to each one of us a manner of practical approach to any subject that will always safeguard and secure all our advances into wisdom. Universal bereavement by its torture makes it impossible for us any longer to deny the existence of spiritual faculties that are the anguished proof of their own existence. No science can convince us that we have not a soul when we feel it suffer so. Neither can any science make a grief-bowed father believe that the response of his soul to the call of the soul that has passed, is anything that mere reason can explain. It is impossible for ordinary people any longer to deny that spiritual facts must be spiritually investigated. When the air to-day is palpitant with the breath of lives suddenly snuffed out, it is impossible for survivors to regard dying as other than a spiritual phenomenon, to the interpretation of which they must bring their spiritual perceptions. We are, however, too thoroughly imbued with scientific method entirely to abrogate it even in the exercise of our intuitions.

We therefore approach a new wisdom of death by enlisting every faculty we possess, intuitive as well as merely rational, and we seek light along every avenue of approach, philosophy, poetry, science, theology, old or new, even spiritism with all its perils. We test each step into the unknown pragmatically, scientifically, for we must have ease from grief if we are not to be paralyzed, and we must have power to remake our own lives and the life of the world in saner accord with eternal purposes, if in any way these can be ascertained. Always the motiving of this universal search is the same, just so much knowledge of dying as will enable us to go on living through this horror. Instant consolation, instant reconstruction, we must attain, if the whole world is not in a moment to be tossed back into chaos. For countless centuries the world has been able to live by evasion: our energy for living has been based on our ability to forget dying. To-day we wake to such havoc as can never in all the future be offset unless we discover how to make destruction

itself the stimulus of an indestructible vigor.

We recognize that the first step toward wisdom must be a vast, clear-reasoned humility. We put out of our minds all the former facile denials belonging to science, denial both of survival in itself and of the right to exercise spiritual perceptions in obtaining knowledge of the spirit's future. Our faithful practice of scientific method itself makes us admit the possibility of psychic faculties still embryonic, which may give us even on this side of the grave glimpses of a power ordained to fuller growth in a non-physical existence, where perhaps we may

“Hear, know, and say
What this tumultuous body now denies;
And feel, who have laid our groping hands away,
And see, unblinded by our eyes.”

We must, in our approach, abandon the pride of the theologian as well as of the scientist. His assertion of details is as much at variance with our method as are the scientist's denials. We accept reverently from theology those many truths

that nerve us to effort, but we discard its dangerous practice of carrying over into the unknown world any of the grossness of this one. We deny denial of survival as too superficial, we deny detail as too arrogant. This great popular pressing into mystery is far too vital for any present crystallization into creed. Unlike the ancient and the medieval views, the New Death does not prefigure the circumstances of survival, while it more and more accepts it. The New Death is experimental, humble; it investigates, it does not dogmatize. It practices rather than theorizes. It is also independent, personal; it is the sum total of an attitude lived rather than argued by millions of individuals who in the intensity of their own experience hardly perceive how widespread is that experience. A study of the New Death cannot too often emphasize the point that it is not a study of abstract truth about death, but a study of the fact that myriads of people are to-day ordering their lives on the hypothesis of immortality. For one man four years ago who lived in accordance with this hypoth-

esis, to-day a thousand do. There is nothing new about the oldest fact on earth; there is everything new in the present attitude toward it. For the first time in history, immortality has become a practical issue for the common man to meet, or history will cease.

It is because of the intensity of their new need that people are turning less to their old masters, the theologians and the scientists, but with an awed docility are seeking illumination from those who are to-day the supreme critics of death, our young men who are dying. These speak, these act, as men having authority, and the force of their influence on the world they have left cannot be calculated, so powerful are the reasons for this influence. In the death of any soldier there has always been something peculiarly memorable; no humblest village ever forgets the graves of its soldiers; no family ever fails to be proud of a fighting ancestor. While the memory of any individual soldier has always been vivid, to-day such memory is multiplied

by the million. But no mere multiplication accounts for the power over the living of our young dead; apart from this, the circumstances of their death are in themselves cogent, for the boys buried on the battle-fields leave behind them an illusion of their continuance due to the suddenness of their passing. They depart from the homes that love them, the homes they have dominated, and are not seen again. They go forth electric with life; no dull announcement from a war office can utterly annul the expectation that they may return. It always needs all the accompaniments of visible sickness and slow dissolution quite to convince us that our living have become our dead. The boys killed in the trenches are still a present force because our brains cannot believe them dead, when our eyes have not seen them die.

Even when loss has been all too sadly visible, it has always been difficult to realize a premature fate. There is something strangely persistent about any unfulfilled life; it always leaves a curious sense of abnormality and waste, and a deep, blind

impulse somehow to give the aspirant young soul the earthly gifts it lacked. There is not a family which has ever lost a child that does not always have as an undercurrent of its thoughts conjectures of that child's development, and a conscious or unconscious adjustment to that child's desires. There is always this psychological continuing of an arrested life, and it is always the more powerful, the more personality the dead youth had attained. The supreme example of this fact is seen in the Christian religion, for it was the force of a young man's death that established that religion; it was founded on the psychology of the universal instinct to fulfill an interrupted ministry as being the only outlet left to affection.

If this dominance of the youthful dead is potent when the end comes uncourted, how much more potent when a young man has offered himself for a great ideal! The men capable of offering themselves for an ideal, must necessarily have been men who had practiced ideals; they must have possessed clearly or obscurely the attributes

of beauty that dignified their final moments. They must, therefore, be worth the study of memory, worth our re-living after them of the creed and the conduct their brief sojourn exhibited. If in a hundred humble ways they inspire us to imitate them, surely their philosophy and example must be our supreme illumination in the matter of which they knew most, and that is death.

More young men, and these more articulate, more capable of inspired utterance, are seeing death to-day than ever before in history. For one Byron of the past, how many poets and artists and musicians are at this time defending the things of the spirit! The interpretation of fate by such men may be more valuable than that of the aged, for they see dissolution in sharper contrast to vigor; the colors of death are to them more accurate, perhaps, than to older men whose faculties are duller, and to whom life, being experienced, is not so alluring in promise. The chief value of the testimony of these young heroes, however, is not so much in the words they speak of death, as in the fact that they chose it.

Seeing that they have voluntarily laid down their lives, — not one only, but whole armies, — how could the world go on its way uninfluenced by their loss? How could it take its eyes from the fate they accepted? If self-preservation exists for the survival of something, may not self-immolation exist for the survival of something? If so, what? We can only grope for an answer, but, groping, we still follow our boys who have passed, feeling that they alone have the right to lead us.

One approaches in reverence the revelations of trench autobiography, which, whether expressed in loftiest poetry or in homeliest slang, comprise the symposium of the sacrificed. Do we realize that the testimony of the trenches forms already a literature of its own, disclosing torment we can scarcely endure, and disclosing far more an idealism in conceptions and in practice before which our aspiration stands awed? All of us who mourn to-day may well turn constantly to this sacred treasury, as to a Bible of beauty and of holy hope. Older men, as they give to the public these

private records of young lives, appear to feel abashed and half-envious, — Gilbert Murray in his account of Arthur Heath, William Archer as he writes of Alan Seeger, Maurice Barrès as he opens to us the letters of French lads, André Chevrillon as he writes of that anonymous young seer, the author of "*Lettres d'un Soldat*." The bulk of war autobiography increases daily, making quotation overwhelming, but the uniformity of its revelations is a truth too startling for any reader to escape. While his actions are supported by an immense comradeship, the thoughts of the soldier move in a great loneliness; therefore, one must give full credit to the singular harmony of utterance, to the strange identity of faith, that so many diverse voices speak. Neither must one ever forget the surroundings in which these records were written; if these writers can succeed in believing the spirit superior to the body, surely of all men who ever lived, their creed is the most triumphant. We ourselves have shrunk at the mere footfall of the undertaker, at the waxen stateliness

of a face once ruddy, at the thud of earth upon a seemly coffin; these circumstances have been enough to make our sensitiveness accept the finality of dissolution. None of us have seen a human body in actual decay, but merely because we know it does decay, we have been overwhelmed and have denied the soul's immortality. The boys upon the battle-fields have seen the forms of their comrades rot before their eyes for months. They write of the stench of putrefaction, of its colors and shapes, or else they preserve a reticence that is even more evidence of their tortured senses. One cannot imagine a more sensitive man than the young French artist who wrote to his mother those letters of imperishable inspiration. To what inward serenity he attains!

"Two good friends of mine, one of them the charming subject of one of my latest sketches, have been killed. This was a terrible discovery for me last night. A corpse white and splendid in the moonlight. I lay down near by. The sense of the beauty of all things awoke once more within me."

Others who are less subtle folk, still with

instinctive poetry lift their thoughts from the unclean charnel to the clean winds of dawn and the singing of the larks. Strange how many records tell of the singing of the larks above the battle-fields!

“Sun-song, up the blue air flinging
Its challenge to the battle-dark and dust.”

What cowardice our old facile doubt seems compared with the faith of those at the front! And cowardice even more craven seems our love of life, our reluctance to leave earth's treasures, when we perceive the passion of yearning these men feel for the life they relinquish. Was ever the poignancy of parenthood more touchingly expressed than in Harold Chapin's letters to his baby son? What passion of yearning for his child's understanding of his purpose breathes from the beautiful sonnet that is Thomas Kettle's battle-field legacy to his little girl!

To My Daughter Betty, the Gift of God

“In wiser days, my darling rosebud, blown
To beauty proud as was your mother's prime,
In that desired, delayed, incredible time,
You'll ask why I abandoned you, my own,

And the dear heart that was your baby throne,
 To dice with death. And, oh! they'll give you
 rhyme

And reason: some will call the thing sublime,
 And some decry it in a knowing tone.
 So here, while the mad guns curse overhead,
 And tired men sigh, with mud for couch and floor,
 Know that we fools, now with the foolish dead,
 Died not for flag, nor King, nor Emperor,
 But for a dream, born in a herdsman's shed,
 And for the secret Scripture of the poor."

Can any one read calmly Alan Seeger's solicitude for his manuscript of poems, or the French "Soldat's" passion to achieve the dreams of his brush? And did ever homesickness become so divine a thing as on the battle-line of Europe? The hunger for the home letters! The nostalgia some glimpse of alien village can evoke! The author of the following was only nineteen when he fell, "gallantly fighting":—

"And here among the wreckage, where a back-
 wall should have been,
 We found a garden green.

 "Hungry for Spring I bent my head;
 The perfume fanned my face,
 And all my soul was dancing
 In that lovely little place, —

Dancing with a measured step from wrecked
and shattered towns
Away — upon the Downs.

“I saw green banks of daffodil
Slim poplars in the breeze,
Great tan-brown hares in gusty March
A-courting on the leas,
And meadows with their glittering streams
And silver-scurrying dace —
Home, what a perfect place!”

Tortured with the sights and cries and odors of carnage, and yearning in every fiber for the earth they relinquished, the boys of the world have marched unflinchingly to their destruction, rebuking in their every gesture our easy despair, and leaving behind them words of confidence coercing us to conviction.

In addition to the force of their idealism and of their written words, the carriage of these young heroes immediately before death must have a peculiar illumination. How do they bear themselves when they reach the border-land? In their conduct on that day, hour, moment, before actual demise, one may reverently study the significance of instincts that are stronger

than self-preservation. There is in the memoirs a noteworthy parallelism in the cheer and hope just before the final hour. One must remember that so far as reason could influence their actions, these men, living for months constantly under the menace of destruction, often show themselves humanly weary and depressed, yet with a startling uniformity they experience a buoyancy of spirit as the actual moment of fatality approaches. This buoyancy is sometimes accompanied by a clear presentiment of their passing, but oftener not; oftener it is combined with a vivid hope of return home with new energies to carry on their interrupted careers. Alan Seeger's last poem runs:—

“Beauty of Earth, when in thy harmonies
The cannon's note has ceased to be a part,
I shall return once more and bring to thee
The worship of an undivided heart.
Of those sweet potentialities that wait
For my heart's deep desire to fecundate,
I shall resume the search, if Fortune grants;
And the great cities of the world shall yet
Be golden frames for me in which to set
New masterpieces of more rare romance.”

The last letter received from Harold Chapin comments: "Everybody seems very high-spirited out here and grumbling is a thing of the past. I suspect that the weather is the reason. Day after day is glorious."

In the course of his In Memoriam, "Oxford and the War," Gilbert Murray writes of certain Oxford heroes: "Woodhead, waiting in advance under machine-gun fire, and knowing that the first man to rise would be a certain victim, chose carefully the right moment and rose first. The only words that Philip Brown spoke, after he was mortally wounded, were words of thought and praise for his servant. Leslie Hunter, on the day before he died, spoke to a friend of his presentiment that death was coming, and then lay for a while in a grassy meadow, singing, 'Im Wunderschönen Monat Mai.'"

That multitudes of soldiers have met their end not only with serenity, but with a high-hearted gayety, is a fact of overwhelming evidence. This hilarity of heroism is the highest proof a man can give

of his certainty that soul is more enduring than body, and exhibited so often at the very instant of passing, may be, to the open-minded, argument for some strange reassurance from that other side. Surely, conviction of immortality from those who have seen the hideousness of carnage in a degree no other men in all history have seen it, is a conviction deserving our respectful study. Coningsby Dawson writes: "There's a marvelous grandeur about all this carnage and desolation — men's souls rise above the distress — they have to in order to survive. When you see how cheap men's bodies are, you cannot help but know that the body is the least part of personality." Gilbert Murray quotes a former pupil who "wrote to me the other day about the Somme battles, and how they had made him feel the difference between soul and body; how the body of man seemed a weak and poor thing, which he had seen torn to rags all about him and trodden into mud, and the soul of man something magnificent and indomitable, greater than he had ever conceived." Harold Chapin writes

his wife: "I swear I've heard more real mirthful, unjarring laughter in the last six months than in the previous six years. I am developing a theory that men who face death have a right to face it how they please, so long as their attitude is genuine, and the happy-go-lucky, laughing-philosopher attitude of our men is absolutely true and neither assumed nor callous."

Donald Hankey only deepens the emphasis in his beautiful memorial, "Of Some who were Lost and afterward were Found":—

"Never was such a triumph of spirit over matter. As for death, it was in a way the greatest joke of all. In a way, for if it was another fellow that was hit, it was an occasion for tenderness and grief. But if one of them was hit, O Death, where is thy sting? . . . Portentous, solemn Death, you looked like a fool when you tackled one of them. . . . One by one Death challenged them. One by one they smiled in his grim visage, and refused to be dismayed. They had been lost, but they had found the path that led them home; and

when at last they laid their lives at the feet of the Good Shepherd, what could they do but smile?"

The manifestations of his experience shown by any human being, soldier or any other, in the moment before dissolution, are of priceless value to the student of death, and to-day we are all students of death. We know that the face of the dying is often dull, unawakened, and the passing of the soul as little noteworthy as the coming of sleep, but we know also that there are times when the approach of death is miraculous. Any death-bed watcher who has ever been privileged to see that sudden unearthly kindling of a face sodden with disease, of eyes and lips suddenly wide with ineffable surprise and joy, as though they looked at something beautiful beyond any imagining, can ever again be quite the same person. The radiance lasts only a moment, and then the face is clay, but that moment is unforgettable, its evidence transcends argument. If one is to be honestly open-minded, honestly scientific,

this fact of transfiguration at the instant of exit must be incorporated in our philosophy of death, for to-day in the stern torments of reality we turn for light on dying to those who know, both those whose wide, illumined eyes we remember, and those others who, sailing near the brink, have returned and can describe their sensations. One such record is quoted in Sir Oliver Lodge's "Raymond," a letter from a woman who survived the Lusitania wreck. "Names of books went through my brain; one especially, called 'Where no Fear is,' seemed to express my feeling at the time! Loneliness, yes, and sorrow on account of others — but no Fear. It seemed very normal, very right, — a natural development of some kind about to take place. How can it be otherwise, when it is natural? I rather wished I knew some one on the other side, and wondered if there are friendly strangers there who come to the rescue. I was very near the border-land when a wandering lifeboat came quietly up behind me. . . . Others on that day were passing through a Gate

which was not open for me — but I do not expect they were afraid when the time came — they, too, probably felt that whatever they were to find would be beautiful — only a fulfillment of some kind. . . . I have reason to think that the passing from here is very painless — at least when there is no illness. We seemed to be passing through a stage on the road of life.”

Of all the diverse mass of contemporary literature — diary, letters, essay, poem, fiction — that gives evidence of the present intensity of interest in death, “The Dark Forest” stands forth as a novel whose entire plot turns on the possibility of personal survival. In no sense whatever a ghost story, it is wholly a novel of the border-land. More than this, it has distinct autobiographic authority, being the result of Hugh Walpole’s sojourn in Russia. The passage he attributes to the Englishman serving in a Russian Red Cross unit is most significant, and could hardly have been written except out of personal experience.

“Here, in nine out of every ten deaths

that I have seen there has been peace or even happiness. This is the merest truth and will be confirmed by any one who has worked here. Again and again I have seen that strange flash of surprised, almost startled, interest, again and again I have been conscious — *behind*, not *in*, the eyes — of the expression of one who is startled by fresh conditions, a fine view, a sudden piece of news. This is no argument for religion, for any creed or dogma; I only say that here it is so, that Death seems to be happiness and the beginning of something new and unexpected. . . . These are all commonplaces, I suppose, that I am describing. The only importance is that some ten million human beings are, in this war, making these discoveries for themselves, just as I am. Who can tell what that may mean? I have seen here no visions, nor have I met any one who has seen them, but there are undoubted facts — not easy things to discount.”

It would be hard to cite any paragraphs from current publications that testify so concretely to the mysterious transforma-

tion to be seen from time to time in the faces of the dying, or that illustrate more convincingly the present preoccupation with the unseen world.

What the boys who are gone have said and have practiced in regard to dying, what we who are left can add to their vivid vision from the wisdom of our experience of loss, the enlightenment of our deprivation, in this combined testimony of the dead and of the bereaved, lies the material for one who tries to formulate from contemporary evidence the elements characterizing the New Death. Nothing is harder than to analyze the trend of any contemporary thought movement, and at the same time nothing is more illuminating than such effort toward self-discovery. Each one of us is conscious of his own new scrutiny of mortality and of immortality, unaware how universal is this impulse toward new light. All manifestations of life are difficult to dissect, and the new interest in death is a manifestation of life, instant, vital with the instinct, not of a mere in-

dividual, but of a whole world, for self-preservation. With an intensity that only a world-ruin could have wrought, plain people everywhere are making trial of immortality as the sole speculation to nerve our action instantly needed, and to safeguard the future that it is our duty instantly to reconstruct. All the expressions of this supreme experiment to be observed in present-day activities and attitude have the same motive, to sift the permanent from the perishable elements of our civilization. All the characteristics of the New Death are different aspects of the effort to discover a set of standards to weigh what is destructive against what is deathless.

The first element to impress one is the directness of approach to realities formerly shunned, or obscured by ceremonies, or too elaborately interpreted by theology, or too elaborately denied by science. Lashed by grief to realization, the plain man recalls with wonder his old indifference. When one is normally comfortable, it is easy enough to forget one's end, but

to-day nobody is normally comfortable. Nobody ever quite forgets that corpse-covered No Man's Land. When a man perceives his son killed, or menaced, he wakes to do his own reckoning with the Destroyer. He must find his own way of bearing the loss of his child, he must find his own way of awaiting his own dissolution. The former evasiveness is impossible. Each man is testing for himself the old symbolism, the old creed, the old agnosticism, for its vitality. For the new world to be built, only so much of the old world's ritual and philosophy of death can hold, as can bear the purging of such grief as the old world never knew.

Both the bereaved at home and the men at the front exhibit the same impulse to sift all ceremonies. One cannot fail to note in trench memoirs the soldier's utter indifference to the conventions associated with demise. This indifference varies all the way from the reassuring, healthy laughter, that is in itself expression of reverence for the soul through impatience of false reverence for the clay, to Harold

Chapin's and the French artist's irritation with all funeral equipage. The English playwright writes this letter of condolence to his wife:—

“I am so sorry not to be with you at such a time. I know how much of it will fall on you, and what a gloomy, long-winded affair the funeral is bound to be. I cannot find any feeling in myself about *him*; we have all known so long it was coming, and I have seen so many die out here that a death is not so looming a thing now as it used to be. You, though, I do feel most awfully for. I can see you looking pinched and pale, and sticking the long, useless service because it's got to be stuck, and the long ride there and the long ride back in the stuffy funeral carriage—I have a hope you may come back some other way—will add their weight of depression—*where depression is needless*.” The italics are Harold Chapin's.

The French painter gives us a thought still more subtle and more serene, discovering new ground for faith in the very fact of putrefaction:—

"How closely in harmony with earth is death, and with what dignity the re-absorption into the maternal body is effected, when one compares it with the tawdriness of our funeral ceremonies. Only yesterday I might have regarded the poor abandoned dead of the battle-field as ill-treated, but after having attended the obsequies of an officer at V., I have come to feel that nature treats the dead more tenderly than do men.

"In truth a soldier's death shares the distinction belonging to natural processes, for it is a frank horror and plays no tricks with the laws of violence. I have often had to pass near corpses whose progressive decay I could observe, and this manifestation of new life was far more reassuring than the chill and changeless aspect of an urban monument."

There is to-day a widespread tendency to examine all our ritual of dissolution, retaining only that which is essentially beautiful and essentially true to our emerging convictions. Symbolism has a more direct relation to our conduct than we are always

ready to grant. The old conventions of burial and of grief over-emphasized the importance of the physical and over-emphasized the importance of individual loss, and so were in themselves an obscuration of the new light we are seeking upon the inexorable face of death. The growing practice of wearing white rather than black for mourning, or of continuing the habitual colors of one's dress, the movement for placing upon the service flag a gold star in memory of a soldier killed, are an attempt toward a fresher and truer symbolism expressing our growing protest against the depression and paralysis too often resultant upon the passage of a loved one from the known world to the unknown. As each of us to-day tests each for himself all the connotations of a possible immortality, we become more and more indifferent to any liturgy or dogma that insists on anything more explicit than our increasing confidence that they survive, those battalions of our young dead.

The present force of individual initiative in examining all the former creeds and

conventions of deace is a characteristic of the New Death closely connected with another. The practical trend of the new inquiry into the unseen causes us to seek light from each other in a way we never did before. We observe other people who are living without their loved ones, and we wonder by what personal philosophy they are upheld. The new attitude toward death is unlike the old in being the result of universal bereavement, and of such a sharing of sympathy as the human soul has never before in all history experienced. In such vast grief, class distinctions are swept away; high and low, rich and poor, are seeking inspiration from each other in the same naked need. Even the fierce animosities of nation to nation are dulled by their shared losses. Blinded and brutalized as are the Germans, they must still love their slaughtered sons. Mr. Britling's letter of sympathy to the German father is but typical of much inarticulate mutual pity. We know the true story of the old Belgian woman tending in her tiny garden three flower-covered graves of Germans. When

the authorities offered to remove these bodies: —

“‘Oh, nay, nay,’ she remonstrated, shaking her head emphatically; ‘nay, mynheeren, God gave me these graves instead of the grave of my boy. I could not tend them so well if they were in the church-yard. It is too far from my house. Nay, nay, let the three sleep here.’”

“‘But you have not the room, madam.’”

“‘There is room in my heart and in my garden, mynheer. I shall keep these three graves and maybe in Germany is one who will keep the grave of my boy.’”

The cry of another mother echoes from stricken Serbia, “Oh, if I were the only mother who is weeping now, it would be nothing; but there are a million mothers weeping to-day.”

“If I were the only mother, it would be nothing!” But this is the first time in the history of bereavement that grief has been so selfless as that! In other days the loss of an only child would have been accepted as cause enough to darken life for any individual mother. We should have re-

garded such a one as pitifully isolated by her fate. In former days people offered sympathy genuinely, but awkwardly. For ourselves we felt it the decent thing to conceal grief, just as we try not to obtrude our own sickness upon acquaintance who are in normal health. Sorrow was a loneliness that only the comparatively few who had tasted it, understood. The usual manner was to shun the subject, to eat and drink and work and forget. We were always a little embarrassed by people who talked easily, even cheerily, of the dead, as if perhaps these had not gone far from us. The New Death is but another illustration of the tendency toward frankness and sincerity in many human experiences that used by general consent to be shoved out of sight. Birth was once a subject for false reserve; now death, like birth, is becoming a subject for frank and fruitful discussion. The old death was a barrier rather than a bond; the New Death is a universal welding of mutual sympathy. The old death, like many other things remade by the war, was too often self-absorbed, self-pitying; now

there are too many grief-burdened people everywhere not to unite in seeking some sane solace. In the search there is a reinforcement of bravery not possible in that former time when we each walked solitary in sorrow. People to-day are thinking, and feeling, in terms no longer personal, but universal.

More conspicuous than shared sympathy, as an element of the New Death, is the shared resilience of these millions of mourners. One aspect of this strange, sacred buoyancy grows directly out of mutual pity. When the world is so full of pain, it seems as if one's own serenity in suffering must be the only sure way of strengthening one's neighbor. The need of fortitude for some one else's sake has always been a quality of individual heroism, but now our neighbor's dependence on our courage has been multiplied beyond calculation, so that the resultant intensifying of each nation's resources of bravery is equally incalculable.

From countless sources, familiar to every reader, comes testimony to the amaz-

ing recuperation of sorrowing survivors in this universal tragedy. "Go about England to-day," writes Gilbert Murray, "and you will find in every town men and women whose hearts are broken, but who are uplifted by a new spiritual strength." Agnes Repplier comments, "That tranquillity should walk hand in hand with violence, that the mental attitude of men and women forever face to face with grief should be a composed attitude, has a psychological rather than a spiritual significance." It is both the spiritual and the psychological phenomena of the new relationship to death that interest the student of the human soul. It is noteworthy for this study that the first response to the enigma of that majestic presence now dominating uncounted homes is not in theories, but in actions, in a great unargued energy. Our boys have died, therefore we must live, is an arresting and illogical conclusion, but surely it is the one that has long actuated both the armies and the households of Europe, and must now support us of the United States, a nation still

new to anguish. How different is the present inspired effort from the paralysis of bereavement, too readily condoned in the old days!

The magnificent recuperative promise of that clarion cry, "After the war," does not draw its first impulse from the ideals of our young dead, ideals we dare not for an instant discontinue! Their example lies upon the survivors like a command that no desolation of grief dares deny. Is not this splendid, dogged hopefulness, on the surface as mad and monstrous as the suffering that has engendered it, a strange, unearthly tribute to the powers of the soul, and a mysterious reassurance for the new world that shall rise from to-day's destruction?

The capacities of the human spirit for courage are perhaps as startling to those who are to-day themselves testing them as to those who but observe and reverence. There is a strange self-security in those strongholds of the heart that utter loss has rendered unassailable. One recalls the tragic triumph of the mother in "Riders to the Sea," when she knows that the sea

has devoured her seventh and last son.
Many a mother's heart to-day must echo
the relief: —

“How it was he died
I know not, but my heart is satisfied;
Never again of all my days will one
Bring anguish for the anguish of my son.
Sorrow is mine, but there is no more dread.
The word has come — ‘On the field of battle,
dead.’”

The word “death” has for each of us a twofold meaning: it implies both our own passing and the loss of our loved ones. Few of us consciously fear our own death, few of us are ever so alarmed at the knowledge that we are ourselves dangerously ill, as at the knowledge that a loved one is in peril. Most of us have a wholesome carelessness of our own fate, but an over-solicitude in regard to those dear to us. The new adaptation of living to dying, if it is to bear the test of the new world's needs, must afford us both a better adjustment of our own mundane existence to its post-mundane possibilities, so that we shall each regard his life with more respect as being

perhaps not too surely finite, and also a new enfranchisement from paralyzing anxiety in regard to our loved ones. During a long century of materialism, we have been always handicapped by the fear of loss until in a moment of time, by a supreme irony, all fear has been swept away by utter desolation.

With brains and hearts clean now of all terror, grief-purged men and women everywhere are rising from this devastation with a wondering respect for the resilience of the human soul, and with a great instinct toward rebuilding driving them on into the new future. Evolution teaches that survival depends on the power of adaptation to environment; is not the effort of each nation to reconstruct this destruction constant evidence of the vast impulse of the human race to discover an adjustment of life to death that shall make for endurance rather than decay?

The immediate expression of this vast impulse to rebuilding is for individual men and women the revaluation of humble daily life. More and more we each feel too small

to grasp the world-issues of to-day, yet at the same time find inactivity unbearable. We turn to the nearest task in desperate desire to make that somehow count for relief and restoration to a war-ridden world. The Young Women's Christian Association of our own country has been quick to utilize this new blind energy, and to make it articulate. The first declaration of its Patriotic League reads, "I pledge to express my patriotism by doing better than ever before whatever work I have to do." The humdrum suddenly stands forth in beauty, dignified by new motives. The humblest tasks become sacred, the merely normal becomes sublime by contrast with carnage. To preserve unbroken all the beauty of the old and common things, we realize as our first obligation toward our boys who also are fighting to maintain all the priceless commonplaces of peace. Thoughtful people everywhere, in the trenches and at home, challenged to perceive the worth of what is still left unassailable, are finding a new valuation for daily existence.

Always our attitude is inextricably influenced by the words and the conduct of the boys whose battle-hours are continually before our imaginations. They have been driven to discover what remains to them of joy in spite of the tumult, just as we at home, agonized by each morning's headlines, suddenly perceive the worth of many experiences too familiar to be prized until contrasted with horror. If in the fire and the mud "out there," men can discover things to give them joy and faith, surely we at home in peace can emulate a little of their serenity. As we read the records of their hearts, as we meet corresponding experiences in our own, we know that no holocaust can unself the soul, and that the deathless privileges of friendship and of family affection and of the beauty of nature can be interrupted, but never destroyed. What father could read Harold Chapin's yearning for his little Vallie, and not hold priceless his own evening romps with his baby? "Dear mother," writes the French artist shortly before his death, "my love — it is the sole human emotion

that one is allowed to retain." Alan Seeger declares: "There is that authority which he alone possesses who, having stood at the very gates of Death, not knowing at what moment his call might come, has, looking backward, surveyed life in the perspective that can be had from this angle alone. I have seen my life all unrolled in such moments, and I can assure you that in that panorama everything else faded away, obscured in the haze of oblivion, through which only gleamed clear and distinct, like green, sunlit islands, the hours when we have loved and been beloved."

To what a worn commonplace family affection had faded before the war came to menace and reveal! Throughout all this land has not every household that possessed a boy treated him with a new sympathy, a real, if often awkward, tenderness? With the threat of loss always over our heads, we are learning how much we love. How petty old irritations seem to-day! How beneficent a privilege the mere fact of an unbroken family circle appears, now that yonder by the hearth a shrouded

form of mystery sits listening to our careless chat. We read this swan-song of an English lad, and know it is articulate of the dumb yearning of whole armies of brave and homesick boys for those small daily blessings we used to hold so lightly: —

“By beauty lavishly outpoured,
And blessings carelessly received,
By all the days that I have lived,
Make me a soldier, Lord.

“I, that on my familiar hill
Saw with uncomprehending eyes
A hundred of thy sunsets spill
Their fresh and sanguine sacrifice,
Ere the sun swings his noonday sword
Must say good-bye to all of this.
By all delights that I shall miss,
Help me to die, O Lord.”

As the smallest home humdrum becomes sacred because of the brave homesickness of our boys, so the views from our windows, a wind-blown tree, the sifting of snow, the twitter of a sparrow, suddenly speak to us in a language to which we had never before listened with such understanding, for we know that the men of the trenches have found undreamed-of heart-

ening in the mere line of hills, in the mere recurrence of sunrise and of moon. How gratefully, how gayly, they write of larks and of violets, the soldier-poets, tortured with carnage! Harold Chapin says to his wife: "You must convince yourself that there are skylarks above the sand dunes near Ostend, just as there used to be pigeons in ruined Louvain, early butterflies in the air among the bullets, crows and rooks around Ypres and Rheims, daisies growing among the Jack Johnson holes at Neuve Chapelle, violets in the ruins of Givenchy, primroses at La Bassée, and so on. Nature carries on business as usual."

In a curiously similar passage Alan Seeger writes: "Nothing more adorable in nature than this daybreak in the Northeast in May and June. One hears the cockcrows in the villages of that mysterious land behind the German lines. Then the cuckoos begin to call in the green valleys, and all at once, almost simultaneously, all the birds of the forest begin to sing. The cannon may roar, and the rifles crackle, but Nature's programme goes on just the same."

No one could read the French artist's letters, with their vistas of French landscape sketched in words that could only have come to a painter's pen, and not ever afterwards regard the mere daybreak, so divinely usual, with new reverence. Sunshine and starshine, the grace of a tree etched black against a winter sky, we see these now with new eyes of thankfulness, when they used to be too commonplace for our comforting.

Another lesson from the trenches the constant presence of death in our thought is teaching us to incorporate into our daily living, their glorified epicureanism. Men who know that their every second on earth is numbered, see every instant's experience in fresh focus. The philosophy of living each minute to the full is again and again extolled by the French artist in his letters to his mother, — "Let us take refuge in the peace of the spring-time and in the pricelessness of the present moment"; and in another passage: "I dare no longer hope. All that one can pray for is the power to

exhaust all the beauty that each instant possesses. This is a new way of living one's life and one that literature did not foresee." Alan Seeger practices the same philosophy: "I took my fill of all the pleasures that Paris can give (and it was Paris at its most beautiful). I lived as though I were saying good-bye to life, and now I am quite content to return."

"To live as if one were saying good-bye to life" implies such an appreciation of the normal as was never before so accurate, so exquisite, so deeply joyous. Our new attitude toward dying necessarily has for its complement this new attitude toward living. Never was the commonplace so shot through with inspiration, never were its spiritual possibilities so clear to us as they stand to-day revealed by the presence of death. An illustration of our new spiritualizing of the homely and familiar was seen in our manner of celebrating the Christmas of 1917. It was a Christmas shorn of all that was irrelevant, burdensome; we gave gifts only where gifts were spontaneous, to the poor, the soldiers, the

children. Countless households obeyed an instinct to make the day a little stronghold of true joy. It was the joy, not of indifference, but of acceptance. There were, for example, poems and stories in the holiday magazines that could never in the old days of materialism have found place there, poems that spoke of death with beauty and buoyancy. For many of us our first war Christmas was the most sacredly joyous that we had ever known. We did not forget the horrors across the water, but rather sought to strengthen ourselves in a Christmas hopefulness unassailable by any horror. In the vast deprivation of to-day we take inventory of our resources, and stand amazed at riches. Is not the present enhancing of daily existence, so that it dares to be frankly sacred, an argument for the true worth of death as a constant, accepted presence to dignify every hour? The result we feel in a new enfranchisement from our old fever and hurry, in a less intense but a more intensive living.

This new spiritual valuation of daily existence is still vague, but struggling

toward clearness, toward continuity, toward community effort. The humblest, the least articulate, of us are conscious of a deep impulse to help, to make dullest duties somehow contribute to the great need. All this instinctive effort gropes toward better perception and more unified purpose. We look into life, we look into death, inquiring as never before what is really worth while, really enduring. Always with eyes on their great example, we long to dignify our daily work by devotion to some cause, we long to know ourselves in line with them, our dead. Always in healthy revulsion at the wastage of their lives, we keep searching, searching, for those ultimate standards that shall harmonize their apparent loss with their actual usefulness. We, the obscure, sorrowing fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, of young soldiers killed, we, the mourners all over the world, want to feel that our lives are moving in tune with theirs. And this need for better ordering of our every-day life intensifies our scrutiny of their dying. What is the force so mys-

terious, so coercive, that commanded them to die? What is the force so mysterious, so coercive, that commands us to live as they would have us live? The New Death is asking with an intensity and a universality never known before, Where are our dead? Is there a God? The need of direction for our energy, and of a standard of valuation, profoundly affects the two most important characteristics of the New Death, its essentially practical acceptance of immortality, its essentially practical approach to God.

Both the bereaved and the young men dead view survival under several different aspects. Created out of a yearning for the physical privileges so abruptly denied, there is apparent a wistful half-belief in an actual return to earthly scenes. This wish cries out in several of Alan Seeger's poems: —

“So shall one coveting no higher plane
Than nature clothes in color and flesh and tone,
Even from the grave put forward to attain
The dreams youth cherished and missed and
might have known.

“Exiled afar from youth and happy love,
If death should banish my fond spirit hence,
I have no doubt, but, like a homing dove,
It would return to its dear residence
And through a thousand stars find out the road
Back into earthly flesh that was its loved abode.”

In the same spirit of yearning Rupert
Brooke hopes: —

“Still may time hold some golden space
Where I’ll unpack that scented store
Of song and flower and sky and face,
And count, and touch, and turn them o’er,
Musing upon them as a mother, who
Has watched her children all the long day through,
Sits, silent-handed, in the fading light,
When children sleep ere night.”

Such perception of the true beauty of earth things, to which we, privileged to grow old, are often blind, is the tribute of soul to body for the blessings its harboring permitted.

The possible revisiting of earth by our dead, invisible, but near to us and tender, gives its note of beauty to many a poem written by people whose perceptions are keen with grief. Winifred Letts’s two

Hallowe'en poems speak a fearless familiarity with the departed: —

“We have no fear of you, silent shadows, who tread
The leaf-bestrewn paths, the dew-wet lawns; draw
near

To the glowing fire, the empty chair, — we shall
not fear,

Being but ghosts for the lack of you, ghosts of
Our well-beloved dead.”

The same thought is in Rowland Thirlmere's “Jimmy Doane”: —

“My house is always open to you:

Dear spirit, come often, and you will find

Welcome, where mind can foregather with mind.”

Have we noticed, in self-examination, that the world-wide devastation of to-day has already destroyed our old instinctive shudder at the supernatural? What living man can do to living man has proved so much more horrible than what ghost or devil might do, that gruesomeness has been transferred from the supernatural to the physical. Both in literature and in life the supernatural as such fails to frighten us. How could we be sorry to have them return to us, the vivid, splendid boys we loved? Would not any occult assurance of their

possible presence be welcome? We have, of course, no sure confidence that they thus return, but at least we have no physical shrinking from the possibility. The New Death conceives an interrelated universe in which spirits still in the flesh and spirits freed from it shall both be associated in some mystic effort toward the future. Certainly the idea of this comradeship is to-day familiar to every soldier, as powerful as it is inarticulate.

Persistence through coöperation constantly renewed is a forceful element in the conceptions of survival characteristic of the present-day examination of death. How many fighting men there are to-day whose biography might be compressed into the two words "Carry on!" These words epitomize the soldier's identity with the comrades that have fallen before him and the comrades who will come after him. The dedication of "Carry on" effects a sequence, a survival, in ideal and in effort, that annuls any individual death. The conduct that should be the first instinct of every survivor is compressed into that

courage cry, "Carry on!" It means the instant filling of the ranks of the fallen. It means that there shall be no gap in the procession of progress. It means that each death shall be an inspiration to endeavor. Many a record from the trenches reveals how constant a presence a slain comrade remains to his mate. We know how many a regiment, decimated again and again, has been remade again and again by that clarion spirit of "Carry on!" It is the soldier's answer in action to the enigma of death, and it is the innermost expression of his love for those who are gone.

That no one who has died for a great cause is ever wasted, that the only right expression of grief is a fresh self-dedication to the cause the loved one loved, is an attitude toward loss that may well pass from the army of warriors to that greater army of civilians; it is already the secret of the strange resilience of sorrowing thousands. This new energy of grief is already clear in many a book, provides the motivating, for example, of "The Worn Doorstep," with its haunting sentence, "I keep

forgetting you are dead," and of Winifred Letts's sequence, "Ad Mortuum," whose sonnet, "Alive," is memorable: —

"Because you live, though out of sight and reach,
I will, so help me God, live bravely, too,
Taking the road with laughter and gay speech,
Alert, intent to give life all its due."

The New Death is characterized by this new grief, reverently joyous in its consecrated energy, and indicative of that needed adaptation of living to dying which shall liberate us from the old paralysis of bereavement.

The soldier's action to-day is motivated, not alone by devotion to his comrades who have fallen, but by his sense of unity with the heroes of all time. He is supported by this kinship, whether it connotes for him merely association in all high endeavor, or whether it signifies actual companionship in that mysterious after world. Herbert Asquith, himself marked by fate, writes of one

"Who found his battle in the last resort,
Nor needs he any hearse to bear him hence,
Who goes to join the men of Agincourt."

The band of happy warriors is constantly before the imaginations of men as diverse as Guy Empey, Ian Hay, and Alan Seeger; the communion of the brave challenges through the battle-agony: —

“So die as though your funeral
 Ushered you through the doors that led
 Into a stately banquet hall
 Where heroes banqueted.

“And it shall all depend therein
 Whether you come as slave or lord,
 If they acclaim you as their kin,
 Or spurn you from their board.”

The soldier's relation to the dead who have inspired him is in itself a revelation to him of his own influence upon those who shall follow him. He is no mere individual, evanescent, isolated, but is welded into the eternal whole by his responsibility toward the heroic who have preceded him and toward the heroic who shall succeed him. The continuity of an ideal annuls the ephemeral, and establishes upon earth the eternal. Volume after volume of war autobiography reveals the fighter's faith in the future, upholding him through every

extremity. Even those two books so curiously alike in impression, although so different in expression, "Under Fire," by Henri Barbusse, and a "German Deserter's War Experience," books so gruesomely convincing in their pessimism, show against their blackness the star-flashes of hope. "Under Fire," perhaps the most terrible arraignment of war that the war has produced, closes with reassurance for the future: —

"My still living companions have at last got up, standing with difficulty in the foundered soil, enclosed in their bemired garb, laid out in strange upright coffins of mud, raising their huge simplicity out of the earth's depths — a profundity like that of ignorance. They move and cry out, with their gaze, their arms, and their fists extended toward the sky whence fall daylight and storm. . . .

"And a soldier ventures to add this sentence, 'If the present war has advanced progress by one step, its miseries and slaughter will count for little.'"

In sharpest contrast to the brutalities

of "Under Fire," another French volume stands forth palpitant with spirituality. Maurice Barrès's compilation, "Les Diverses Familles Spirituelles de la France,"¹ is a book unique in history; nothing so quiveringly fresh from national experience has ever been written. It records, in their letters, the inspiration that has carried the young soldiers of France beyond the grave. No one, reading, can doubt that this new burning faith in the future, the future of this physical world, and the future in that world to which they go, both alike so passionately believed in by these boys, can fail to affect the era we are entering, in ways hardly yet to be prophesied.

It is in their service to the future that young men of proved genius find comfort for their arrested course. With eyes made tragically clear, they perceive that a premature fate may have greater influence than an accomplished career. A profound intuition reveals to them that it is more divine to be a man than to be an artist, and that their deepest peril is to fail the challenge

¹ Translated into English by Elizabeth Marbury under the title of *The Faith of France*.

to battle, for if they presume to believe themselves more valuable to the world alive than lost, they may choke at its source the wellspring of their inspiration. If they choose sacrifice, they have hope that other men may achieve the fulfillment they set aside; while, if they choose life, they may live barren of all achievement. With all his passionate longing for life, Alan Seeger has the vision to see that "their death was the death which beyond all others they would have chosen for themselves, that they went to it smiling and without regret, feeling that whatever value their continued presence in the world might be to humanity, it would not be greater than the example and inspiration that they were to it in departing. We to whom the idea of death is familiar, walking always among the little mounds and crosses of the men 'morts au champ d'honneur,' know what this means."

The French artist gazes from his dugout into the distant future as he studies the far reverberations of all heroic example: —

"Tell M. that fate strikes down the best,

but it is not unjust. The bad who survive are thereby ennobled. Let her accept the sacrifice knowing that it is not vain. You do not know the lesson taught by him who falls. But I, I know it!"

And in an unforgettable passage he expands the thought:—

"Who shall say that the survivor, the comrade of some fallen thinker, shall not be the inheritor of his thought? No experience can disprove this sublime intuition. The peasant's son who sees the death of some young scholar, some young artist, may he not perhaps continue the interrupted work? It may become for him the link in an evolution only for an instant suspended. Yet the crucial sacrifice for each is this: to renounce the hope of being the torch-bearer. It is a fine thing for the child, in his play, to carry the flag, but for the man, let it be enough to know that the flag will be carried whatever befall."

A chance paragraph from a newspaper corroborates the truth of this vision by showing that a poet dead before his time may still influence the world in ways

which perhaps he would gladly have died to establish. A publishing house states, as a phase of the war-time book market, "an increasing interest in poetry, started perhaps by the tragic and untimely death of the talented Rupert Brooke." Of the young French artist himself one may wonder whether any pictures by his mature brush would ever have gripped the memory as do his pen-pictures of the rolling plains and hills he saw from his dugout, or whether any accomplishment of his genius would ever have equaled the inspiration born in him by his service and his sacrifice.

Earthly sacrifice through continuity of courageous endeavor appears to be the soldier's most immediate inspiration to fearless dying. The spirit of "Carry on" implies the support of vast coöperation, of liberation from all that is petty, flashes before the meanest man a vision of impersonal living and impersonal dying which both alike attest the perpetuity of an immortal something. Apart from this earthly immortality through effort, what does the

soldier see for himself, each single lad in the ranks, in that misty land he knows he is entering? What promise does he perceive for the persistence of his individual soul? Searching for the answer, one is overwhelmed by the impression given by all trench records: whatever else the soldier may expect of that other side, of one thing he seems absolutely assured, measureless well-being; he is going to a place that is good, and he is going with every faculty alert for new adventure. Almost nothing in the mass of memoirs reveals any definite shaping of that existence about to begin. Assurance takes almost no color from previous education, Catholic, Protestant, agnostic. All we can perceive is the absolute confidence in a new glad life just opening. This perception of joyous adventure is implicit in that beautiful term of soldier slang, "Going West." The British Tommy does not guess how many ages have contributed their beauty to the phrase. The Happy Isles of Greek myth had welcome for those whose purpose held "to sail beyond the sunset." Medicine

val legend rewarded its defeated Arthur with a new kingdom in the island valley of Avilion. The Happy Isles of the Greeks, the Avilion of medieval dreamers, both set in western waters, were mystic ports reached without dissolution. Ulysses, Arthur, sailed westward from living ken, to some mysterious harbor, but not through the portals of decay. Those bygone legends that have lent their loveliness to the words, "Going West," believed

"There is no death,
What seems so is transition."

For the modern centuries "West" has been a word to conjure with. It still holds all the glamour of a new world, the dauntless discovery of a Columbus, daring all his soul's passion in the quest of the unknown. The traveler tales that enthralled Elizabethan England, were tales of the West. Eldorado and the Klondike have contributed their more recent romance. "Going West" has always spelled adventure; it has connoted, too, the inspiration of self-dependence, the fair, free chance; it has implied lonely effort, lonely exploration,

crowned by some unguessed felicity. Yet to-day the actual Occident is shorn of its stimulus. The earth has been over-discovered; a man may sail clear around it, and arrive at no legendary West. Wherever he goes, other men have been before him. But there is left for us one land forever undiscovered, one unploughed seapath for Columbus courage. The British Tommy endues death with all the romance of three thousand years when he calls it "Going West."

Passing from the general to particular testimony to the soldier's premonition of a joyous life to come, one recalls the reassurance of Rupert Brooke and of Alan Seeger, so different from the agnosticism of their poems written before the war. Rupert Brooke's words ring like a triumphal chant:

"Safe shall be my going,
Secretly armed against all death's endeavor;
Safe though all safety's lost; safe where men fall,
And if these poor limbs die, safest of all."

"Death is nothing terrible after all," writes Alan Seeger; "it may mean something even more wonderful than life."

The following was written by a boy,
"killed in action" when he was twenty:—

"And this we know: Death is not life effete,
Life crushed, the broken pail. We who have seen
So marvelous things know well the end not yet.
Victor and vanquished are a-one in death:
Coward and brave: friend, foe. Ghosts do not say,
'Come, what was your record when you drew
breath?'

But a big blot has hid each yesterday,
So poor, so manifestly incomplete.
And your bright Promise, withered long and sped,
Is touched, stirs, rises, opens, and grows sweet,
And blossoms and is you, when you are dead."

The conviction of the divine adventure
has caught the imagination of a young
American, still only a junior in college, so
that his recent sonnet is but one more evi-
dence to the change of feeling toward
death:—

"I feared the lonely dead and turned away
From thoughts of somber death and endless night;
Thus, through the dismal hours I longed for light
To drive my utter hopelessness away.

"But now my nights are filled with flowered dreams
Of singing warriors, beautiful and young;
Strong men and boys within whose eyes there gleams
The triumph song of worlds unknown, unsung;

Grim Death has vanished, leaving in its stead
The shining glory of the living dead."

The sense of triumph and delight is as clear a note in the words of the bereaved, as in the expectations of those who have gone beyond. For Winifred Letts, there is

"a fairer place
Than even Oxford town,"

where there is

"laughter and a merry noise
Now that the fields of Heaven shine
With all those golden boys."

In "War Poems by X," the anonymous English father who has given two sons to the sacrifice, there is the same dwelling on the joys the youthful legions have found: —

"And each of them in raiment
Of honor goeth drest
And hath his fee and payment
And glory on his breast."

That the young and splendid cannot die, that their arrested powers must persist somewhere, is the growing conviction of all who mourn to-day. That vision which through all the ages individuals have glimpsed and have incorporated into in-

spired living is by universality of loss becoming the vision, no longer of the few, but of the many. The vision of the many is the material of which the motives of progress are made. They were so beautiful that it is impossible to believe them extinct, those dead boys we long for. Perhaps they would gladly have died for this alone, to free the new world from the old world's dread of death.

Conviction of immortality as shown in the soldier records is in the main profoundly intuitive, but so powerful and so common that one cannot believe that so many men, and these alert in every fiber, could be altogether deluded. It seems more scientific to query whether perhaps they possess truer illumination than mere intellect, unsupplemented by the subtler capacities of soul evoked by their tragic situation, could ever attain. Men who in peace were as keenly rationalistic as any, yield themselves on the battle-field to overpowering intuitions which they sometimes feel helpless to transmit to loved ones still in safety.

In so far as their marvelous inner security has for themselves any basis in reason it rests partly on the immortal renewal they observe in nature. Sunrise and recurrent star and the pushing-up of the indomitable flowers are argument for human persistence, since man, too, is a part of the great earth force. To the young French painter the vitality, the repose, the beauty, of nature are so constant an inspiration that one closes the book rebuked for one's indifference to the lesson that through all his agony he perceived and practiced. The reassurance of beauty breathes from every page, — "Every day I see a new cross in the little cemetery, and the triumphant spring-time over all."

Sometimes the indomitable joy of earth takes hold of a boy's soul like wine, as in these verses of Charles Sorley's, dead at twenty: —

"Earth that never doubts nor fears,
Earth that knows of death, not tears,
Earth that bore with joyful ease
Hemlock for Socrates,
Earth that blossomed and was glad
'Neath the cross that Christ had,

Shall rejoice and blossom, too,
When the bullet reaches you.
Wherefore, men marching,
On the road to death, sing!
Pour your gladness on earth's head,
So be merry, so be dead."

Apart from identification with Nature, and from the reasoned argument of her exhaustless vitality, many a soldier reveals a consciousness of an indestructible immortal something within him. He would still feel this inner confidence even if all communication with external nature were denied him, if he could hear no bird-songs, see no stars. Page after page of "Lettres d'un Soldat" testify to that sense of eternity which is the core of his courage and his calm. "All this human madness is nothing compared with that portion of eternity which each man carries within his soul." Again, he speaks of those precious moments when "we perceive within us through all the wounds and upheavals of our poor humanity, a sure tendency toward the permanent, the absolute, and we recognize the divine inheritance of which we are the heirs."

Alan Seeger delights to feel himself in the play of world-forces that are eternal in energy. Rupert Brooke is comforted to be "a pulse in the eternal mind." One might envy these three seer-soldiers, French, American, English, what one might call their cosmic security, the content of the atom that perceives itself part of an indestructible whole. There is, however, in the fourfold sense of survival to be studied in soldier records — comradeship of idealism, expectation of glad adventure, the reassurance from the vitality of nature, the consciousness of something eternal at the center of the soul — little that is definitely personal, just as there is little that suggests the old conventional doctrines either of science or of theology. In contrast there flashes before us the warm personal hope of Donald Hankey, in his last recorded words: "If wounded, Blighty. If killed, the Resurrection!"

As one studies the views on survival inherent in the new attitude toward death, one finds that the ideas of those who have

gone, and the ideas of those who survive, differ. The soldier seems swept on in a great confident current toward some profound blessing and happy experience, but, as in his earthly action, his individuality is gladly merged into the mass, so his conception of the after life is not personal, self-occupied. On the other hand, the minds of mourners dwell more intensely than ever in history on personal survival, on the continued existence of the boys they have lost, as vivid, separate entities. Yet the two views, confident, the one of the general, the other of the individual, beatitude of that new existence, are equally characteristic of the nature of the New Death. The New Death is always essentially the readjustment of daily living to the new fact of universal destruction. The New Death, forced to be instantly practical, seeks not theories, but inspiration to energy. The boy about to die would find these two needs best satisfied by fusing himself with the great heroic whole, caring little for individual persistence if only the goal of the universal ideal

be attained, while the survivors who had lost him could not be readily comforted by so indefinite an inspiration; they would need assurance that the boy himself whom they loved was still alive beyond the veil.

It is the views of survivors that will affect the future. Those who are left share with those who have passed the idea of well-being beyond the grave, but supplement this with a vivid belief in personal continuance. That our dead are alive and the same that we loved, and that they joyously continue the upward march, is the dominating faith of the New Death. There is in this creed nothing new, except the incalculable novelty that never before did so many people evolve it, each for himself, and never before did so many people practice it as the deepest inspiration of their daily conduct.

Would it be possible to believe in the immortality of the soul and not at the same time believe in Deity? Would it be possible to believe that the spirit advances here and beyond the grave, and not believe its course divinely directed? All continu-

ity, both of abstract progress and of individual human life, implies a guidance, a purpose. Just as the New Death conceives the spirit-world as an ever-pressing reality, requiring an incessant revaluing of our mundane occupations as we attain new spiritual standards, so it looks at God with a new directness. As an examination of the present views on survival shows them independent, unconventional, and as profoundly intuitive as if a century of science had not*grounded us in materialism, so the approach to God is to-day immediate, intense, practical, in its cry for instant guidance through this horror. A few years ago we avoided thinking about God as easily as we avoided thinking about death. That indifference is destroyed. We find thoughtful men, especially in England and France, looking back with shame at our days of facile faithlessness, equally aghast at our former disregard of the divine, and at the Kaiser's championship of a tribal God of battle revived from an age grown almost legendary. In the words both of statesmen and soldiers to-day

one sees a return to the first condition of true religion, humility. Only the bewilderment of agony could have made us humble enough to be reverent. Because action and conviction require a mutual reinforcement, a condition too often through ignorance of psychology neglected by religious teachers, because we can neither act heartily unless we first believe, nor believe heartily unless we also act, because full conviction is obtained solely by embodiment in action, — it is the soldier, through his utter abandonment of self to service, who has to-day attained the clearest religious certainty.

The faith of fighters revealed in their memoirs is vital, unfaltering, but the expression of the same fundamental creed differs according to the individual. Alan Seeger calls his God, Destiny, but it is Destiny so deeply trusted as to become personal. To him God is first the artist of whose kindness we may be confident because He has given us beauty, because His is

“The hand that peopled the earth and air

And set the stars in the infinite

And made night gorgeous and morning fair”;

and also God is the captain of man's soul,
to whose unknown but splendid guidance
the soldier gladly yields, —

“We saw not clearly, nor understood,
But yielding ourselves to the master-hand,
Each in his part as best he could
We played it through as the Author planned.”

As a rule the soldier is a fatalist, but his
is the fatalism of profound faith. Julian
Grenfell, another of the slain, reveals the
soldier psychology: —

“Through joy and blindness he shall know
Not caring much to know, that still
Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so
That it be not the Destined will.”

The “Lettres d'un Soldat” read like a
psalm of serenity, although, in terms of
expression, his religion is neither pagan nor
Christian. Through all the battle din,
God led him by the still waters: “Some-
times a shell covered me with earth and
deafened me, and then quiet fell once more
upon the frosty world. I paid dear, but
I had moments of solitude full of God.”
He has absolute trust in a divinely ordered
evolution victorious over all havoc: “It

is perhaps a high destiny and privilege that our generation should be witness of these horrors, but what a terrible price to pay! And yet, Faith eternal dominating all. Faith in an Evolution, an order, transcending human patience."

His exquisite submission echoes a greater renunciation: "Dear, after revolt that has shaken me to tears, I find that I can still say, 'Thy will be done'"; and in a later letter, "I still had something noble to accomplish upon earth — and yet, since God is unwilling to remove His cup, may His will be done."

This absolute subjection of the soldier to his divine superior has exact parallel in Harold Chapin's letters about the religious training of his tiny son, that privilege he was so loath to entrust to others: —

"Of course I have no objection to your teaching Vallie a prayer, — why should I have? Only please teach him one thing: that his prayer may not be answered, and that if it is n't, he must not think God cruel or unmindful. 'Thy will be done' is the safety-valve in all prayer, and believers

in God must surely think — if they do not say — those words as a part of every prayer.”

For that Christian warrior, Donald Hankey, faith is the highest spiritual adventure: —

“If belief in God is illusion, happy he who is deluded! He gains this world and thinks he will gain the next.”

“The disbeliever loses this world and risks losing the next.”

“True religion is betting one’s life that there is a God.”

Much evidence shows that religion “over there” is not the monopoly of the educated. Both the French painter and Alan Seeger tell of churches crowded with *poilus*. Donald Hankey, in his sympathetic study of the religion of the inarticulate, testifies that his cockney comrades have deepest respect for the Christian virtues and for the personality of Christ, although they are often doubtful of the forms of faith and practice as presented by the churches.

The religion of the soldier facing death

is a denial of all the old materialism that once infected equally the educated and the uneducated. The color and shape of the faith differ in different men, but not its intensity, its confidence. Its practice is definitely Christian in its democracy, its kindness. Even the two books that might boast themselves untainted by faith in God pour their repressed idealism into faith in man. "Under Fire" and "A German Deserter's War Experience" honor the common man, his natural instincts toward brotherhood, in a way that controverts all the seeming cynicism by a reverence for the Holy Ghost triumphant in the tortured human spirit.

As in all departments of life to-day our attitude and action are inextricably influenced by the attitude and action of the young dead always present to our memories, so the religion of the home army accepts the distinctly soldier elements of their creed. The soldier regards God as the intelligence that marshals the moral forces of all time, but as an intelligence, like his general's, to be trusted, rather than

understood, and he regards a blind and unquestioning obedience to this direction as the individual's only possible contribution to the ultimate victory. His religion is therefore, first, absolute trust, and then absolute submission. The immediacy of the fighter's need makes it easier for him to attain these two conditions than for us, whose incorporation of creed in conduct is not so instant a constraint, but the religion at the front and at home has the same frankly intuitive character. The new philosophy of death, born of our naked defenselessness, openly employs intuition, spiritual reassurance, half-occult, perhaps, but overpowering. The God perceived through the effort to reconcile living to universal destruction is not the God of theology. He is sometimes frankly an evolutionary God, Himself travailing with His universe toward perfection. It is not, however, the attributes of God that concern the New Death, but the attitude toward Him, and the practical expression of this attitude both in public actions and in private.

After decades of materialism a new mysticism is being born. The quickened sense of a God controlling the issues of life and death is a natural reaction against our puzzlement at wanton wastage of lives. All of us to-day perceive a Power in the world beyond all human comprehension. Some great force is let loose upon us, for our destruction or our regeneration? A Power is certainly at work, — is it God or devil, for no one dares longer to call it chance? Every instinct answers, God. We are growing readier in using His name. The young soldier-thinkers quoted were none of them men who in earlier life would have talked easily of religion. We have become less awkward in acknowledging that we stand in the presence of mysteries too deep for us. A young doctor gone to the front recently startled the society acquaintance he had left by writing home, "There is no fear here but the fear of God." God and immortality have become facts for our every-day life, while they were only words, and words avoided, before.

The new thing about faith to-day is

that it is voluntarily intuitive, and that its mysticism is not contemplative but active. This mysticism is conscious. Earlier ages have been intuitive because they had not had experience of being scientific. The scientific attitude was a stage of growth ordained for our adolescence, but it did not indicate the maturity we thought it did. Our intuitions of God to-day are more to be relied upon than those of earlier periods that were unaware of pitfalls. The evidence of our mature wisdom is that, having experienced the pitfalls, we have voluntarily returned to a childlike acceptance. For how many decades we used to gaze wistfully at cathedrals, helplessly proud to have outgrown the vision that created them! The only way to restore faith was to sweep our self-reliance from us, to make us again like children, helpless before unknown things, like children who are always both eager and afraid.

As children are forced to trust some grown-up as they advance into the mysteries of existence, we of to-day are con-

scious of some strange, unearthly power sustaining us through incredible shock, and therefore become the promise for each of us of some new and splendid adventure of development. We do not argue about God, we accept Him. We do not argue about survival, we accept it. Universal destruction has swept from us every other dependence. It is frankly an experiment, this new spirituality, this new adjustment, this New Death. For the first time in the world, millions of people are making the adventure of faith, engrossed in the import of immortality, the import of God, not as a dogma of the next world, but as a practice for this one. There is nothing new about immortality, there is nothing new about God; there is everything new in the fact that we are at last willing to live as if we believed in both. This is the religion of the New Death.

Imperceptibly during these four tragic years the light on the adamant face of death has been changing for each one of us. That mask of mystery is no longer cold and

gray, but warm with dawn. Not one of us is so afraid of dying as he used to be. If we take inventory, we shall see that we have traveled farther than we knew toward friendship with death. The aspects of the New Death already clear to any examination,—its frank treatment of mysteries our materialism used to shun, its measureless comradeship in sympathy and in energy, its confidence in the survival both of the individual and of his ideals, its direct approach to God,—have we not each one of us felt all these impulses stirring in his soul? What we had not perceived, perhaps, is the universality of the great inquiry, and its significance for the great reconstruction. As we see before us destruction, more and more and more, we are conscious within us of a determination ever grimmer, and — yes, gladder! Our own inner witness is corroborated by life and literature all about us, so that the recuperative promise of the new energies released by the new intimacy with death is hardly yet to be calculated. Yet to conjecture the future trend of our new spir-

itual impulsion is to illuminate the black present with shining hope.

The tendencies of future thought and action that will be born of the present recoil from materialism, will be an intensifying and enlarging of the characteristics of the New Death already clearly observable, because the motives for inquiry and for activity will remain the same — instant recuperation from ruin, instant relief from grief. The investigation of the soul's relation to body will become even more intensely practical in the after time than now, for the cessation of war will give us a realization that the pressure of the fight now mercifully spares us. Not until the curtain of fire is lifted shall be revealed the loss to the world's life of the lives laid down. Not until then shall each of us left alive feel to the full his responsibility to the world to come. We are coerced to a better understanding of death if the sacrifice of our sons is not to be empty, and if the future is to contain the elements that make for continuity rather than for corruption. A new vision of our

mortality is necessary if we are not to remain moribund. In some strange way not yet fully fathomable the old world is proved to have had within it the seeds of its own destruction. It is our sacramental duty to see that the new world shall have within it the seeds of its own resurrection.

The responsibility to the dead to build the future they died for is to-day the unargued impulse of all the bereaved; the future itself will clarify this popular impulse and transform it into a binding obligation that will be the clue to all emergent activities, both mental and material. Universal grief has made responsibility for the future also universal, so that the making of to-morrow is no longer the exclusive performance of the philosopher and the statesman; it has been transferred to every humble man and woman who has given a son to the world's war. For us who fight for the rights of the individual, the symbol of coöperation must be the responsibility of each individual among us. In a free democracy the attitude toward govern-

ment should not be noisy blame for mistakes, since the mistakes are each man's own, nor yet noisy praise of achievements, since the achievements are also each man's own; and both for a man and for a nation accomplishment should never lead to that self-approval which is enervating, but to that endeavor which is inexhaustibly aspirant. It is the responsibility of each man and woman and child to-day to see that we Americans shall have as clear and efficient expression for our idealism as the Germans have had for their deviltry, — a responsibility which, translated into immediate practice, means that each one of us must be tireless in transforming the lethargy, ease, indifference, both of his small community and of his great country, into enlightenment, energy, and sacrifice. We have long been the most careless and comfortable nation in the world: to-day, by the graves of the boys we have offered for the world's service may each man and woman of us be inspired to a holy intelligence and to an iron endurance. The battle for freedom cannot be won, the broken

world cannot be rebuilt, except through the dedication of each one of us. The dawn is already breaking of a day when duty can no longer be deputed to any government — the new world must be the work of plain men and women everywhere. These plain men and women realize that their first need in their rebuilding is enlightenment as to what is imperishable. They perceive that universal death has destroyed the old standards of living; they must first of all, therefore, understand death better, if in the time to come they are to make death itself the inspirer rather than the destroyer of progress. Of course, there are few for whom the investigation is so definitely articulate as this, and yet a better understanding of death solely in order to have a better understanding of living, is the dominating motive of a popular inquiry as profound in its need as it is practical in its application of every spiritual discovery.

Because this vast examination of the unseen is a people's movement pressing from below upward, it is the more difficult

to prophesy the force of its effects; but one may safely say that this spiritualizing of popular purposes will provide such a support to any statesman possessing idealist vision as thinkers who are still walking according to bygone lights could not readily admit. It will be as impossible for the human spirit as for human statecraft, to return to the *status quo ante*, yet there are Americans as well as Germans who are blind to the import of the new popular vision. American thought has been slower than French or English to allow its old agnosticism to be permeated by the new intuitions of immortality, and the reasons are simple. The newest nations are always, like children, the most conservative, and we of America are always as afraid to accept innovations in thought as we are ready to accept them in practical affairs. The only other contemporary movement comparable in force with the New Death is socialism. Both these movements are underestimated by the so-called upper classes — will the leveling of this war leave any such? Honor to those intellectuals, far

more common in smug England and skeptic France than here, who are not afraid to rank themselves frankly one with the common man — humbled to reverence, open to mystery, curious of immortality. Gilbert Murray writes of England's advance into "the knowledge that there are things in life which are greater than life. We have learnt more than we ever learnt before, that the true work of mankind upon earth is to live for these greater things. I am not exaggerating or using highfalutin language. Go out into the street and talk with the first bus-driver or cabman who has lost his son in the war; he may be inarticulate, but if once he begins to speak freely, you will find him telling you that he does not grudge his son's life."

Another English thinker frankly voices his wonder before the implications of survival: "An acceptance of the faith that the human personality survives death involves a tremendous change in one's outlook on life. No longer is the universe seen as the ruthless scheme of an unknown and

terrible God. . . . Human life does not stop short at the grave, a truncated thing, but takes up its growth and development after death, and continues the course of evolution in future worlds as yet unknown and unguessed."

The permeation of the upper strata of thought by the popular intuitions has come to England and France through the welding of all classes in the common needs of suffering and of succor, but even in those two countries one can see a difference in attitude among the young, the middle-aged, and the old. The young men, facing death, write of their continued existence with rapt certainty, the old men regard that vision with wistful credence; these are old enough to be humble, while the young men are young enough to be intrepid. The middle-aged, however, are as tenacious as they are timid. Insulated by intellect, they do not readily admit the present electrifying of all life by the new popular perceptions. They do not see how many people everywhere are believing the soul

survives, and contrary to the indifference of four years ago, living as if they believed it. To many persons thinking and writing to-day, especially on this side of the water, immortality still appears a senseless superstition. From such old sluggishness of agnosticism the future is bound to awaken us. More and more, in all departments of thought and opinion, we shall be affected by the thoughts and opinions of our allies. Before the devastation of to-morrow, an alliance of ideals, a unity of vision, will be a need even more instantly pressing than our present military coöperation. As in the helplessness and horror of loss, England and France have been humbled to dependence on the great intuition, so we, too, shall be humbled. In that relentless day we, too, blinded and weak with grief, shall be seeking with the rest that light on death that shall illumine our rebuilding.

This widespread questioning of the grave's secrets can be seen in two manifestations, its effect upon contemporary literature, and its stimulus to psychic re-

search, effects which promise to increase in intensity as time goes on. That majestic mystery, constantly present at every hearth, constantly present in every one's imagination, rebukes the flippancy of literature, which shows everywhere a deepening insight. Poetry is an increasing demand, philosophic treatment of politics and history is popular, essays of acumen are read before one reads the fiction in the magazines. The intensified emotion and quickened intellect exhibited everywhere in our periodicals are producing the inevitable result of better artistic expression. An increasingly higher level of thought and phrasing is conspicuous in periodical literature.

Less and less in every day of this prolonged agony is death either in a book or in actuality regarded as final for any individual. Conjectures of the soul's career after exit were accepted material for fiction long before the war. Matter as diverse as "The Glimpse" and "The Return of Peter Grimm" appealed without apology to popular fancy. Patience Worth

has been an entity we have puzzled over rather than curtly dismissed. This openness to the possibility of spiritual persistence and adventure has been incalculably increased to-day, and current fiction may well be examined for the degree to which it reflects the attitude. This reflection may be studied from two aspects, either as it reveals the actual philosophy of the writer, or as it is his conscientious effort to mirror the psychology of his era, and both aspects are clearly testimony to the present preoccupation with immortality. One does not conceive the author as holding a brief for survival, but as being, like the reader, alert, full of question, so that he cannot altogether kill a character, or quite convince us that the story is finished when a man dies. Snaith's latest novel, "The Coming," lately alarmed a militarist critic by the tendency of its spiritual standards to nullify the hearty death-decisiveness of warfare. "Changing Winds" possesses a death-scene that in any novel of five years ago would have been heart-rending, but which in emphasis is passed

over as lightly as if the most lovable character in the volume had been merely speeding on some joyous journey. "Changing Winds" is, in its totally different way, like "Under Fire," an arraignment of war, yet its clearest impression is that the destruction of its splendid young quartette is for the world loss, but for themselves liberation. New spiritual vision has during this war-period given us some of the most beautiful short stories our magazines have ever shown; for example, Will Levington Comfort's "Chautonville," and Alice Brown's "Flying Teuton," in both of which the seen world and the unseen are exquisitely interfused. Many short stories of to-day and novels also have for motive the dedication of a joyous grief — conspicuously, "The Worn Doorstep."

One department of literature has to-day lost its grip upon the imagination. The ghost story is a legitimate form of art, but to-day it fails to affect one. Compare one's reactions, for instance, to Algernon Blackwood's tales and Mrs. Burnett's "White People." The supernatural as such

completely fails to frighten us; we have been forced to live too close to it. How could a ghost story evoke its old chill in a day when grief would be glad of the manifestation of any spirit's persistence?

It is Mrs. Willsie, of the "Delineator," who attributes the new tendencies of literature directly to the fresh conceptions of spirit-power: "This craving for conviction of the hereafter, increased by the war, inevitably makes our literature more spiritual, so we are seeing the last for a while of the sex novel and of sordid realism. We no longer find people who believe that since you are an artist you should describe the contents of a garbage can. The soul of man as well as the body of man is coming into its own as the theme of the novelist. And the war is responsible. You can't stick out your tongue and make a face at God when a shell may momentarily hurl you from the earth."

We all feel a reaction to-day against writers who are consciously clever or purely frivolous. In spite of the deepening and purifying of contemporary litera-

ture, the desires of readers are as yet unsatisfied by the response of writers, but the readiness of the public to read what is thoughtful will undoubtedly produce profounder matter for its reading. Both writers and readers are thinking and feeling and acting too intensely for immediate expression, but when our minds are again released from battle, we may expect an output rich in spiritual perception. As a quickened nationalism and the discovery of a new world were the strongest influences to make the Elizabethan renaissance, so we may believe that in our own to-morrow the new national consciousness and the new intuitions of a spirit-world may produce a literature of novel power and beauty.

There are, however, indications of temporary dangers due to the popular pressing into the unseen. It is possible that both books and living may be too much affected by occultism. "The Dark Forest" is an example. There the romance is so surely handled as to avoid the risk, but it goes to the brink of the peril, and

one step farther into the supernatural would carry it from the realm of the real into that of the fantastic. Perhaps as far as novel or real life may safely proceed is to treat death as a gateway on the upward pilgrimage of evolution, without too much conjecture of the path beyond the portal.

There is undoubtedly to-day a greatly increased interest in psychic discovery; one cannot conjecture whether this interest may have results altogether good, or partly bad. Occultism is a natural reaction from materialism, yet occultism is an accusation attaching only to the ignorant; it cannot apply to the patient science or to the sane advice of real investigators. There is an increasing readiness to allow spiritist study its legitimate place in scientific research, and no longer to ridicule its exemplars as either fools or knaves. Psychic investigations are to-day no longer lightly dismissed, and few people who pride themselves on intellectual liberalism do so dismiss them. Too many men of

unimpeachable scientific method and devotion, too conspicuous revelations for facile denial, too intense a desire to believe, prevent our former nonchalant disregard for such facts as spiritism may teach us.

In our noisy scorn of the infinitely painstaking students of spirit-phenomena, we have failed entirely to hear the wisdom of some of their words. They distinctly warn the laity against presuming itself any better equipped to carry on independent investigations in spiritist science than in any other branch. As we leave electricity to electricians, and medicine to doctors, merely accepting their hypotheses as guidance for our practical affairs, so we may safely do in regard to spiritism. The advice of Sir Oliver Lodge is certainly clear-headed: "Unless people are well-balanced, and self-critical and wholesomely occupied, they had better leave the subject alone."

In another passage: "It may be asked do I recommend all bereaved persons to devote the time and attention which I have done to getting communications and

reading them? Most certainly I do not. I am a student of the subject, and a student often undertakes detailed labor of a special kind. I recommend people in general to learn and realize that their loved ones are still active and useful and interested and happy — more alive than ever in one sense — and to make up their minds to live a useful life until they rejoin them.”

Another student of the occult, Dr. Hyslop, warns against the danger of becoming so engrossed in the realities of the future as to neglect the realities of the present, declaring the ultimate purpose of all spirit-discovery to be better light on the present nature of the soul entrusted to our care. He declares, “We are, of course, not to live only for that future, but to apply the moral law in the present so that its effects will not conflict with the larger outlook that the cosmos may provide.”

The safe attitude toward the intrepid investigators of the spirit-world would seem to be our obligation toward them

of an openness of intellect and imagination, combined with the sure sense for ourselves that the light shed on this world by light on that other only points us to greater present activity. Both the fullest and the most tentative acceptance of the evidence from spirit-testimony would seem to contribute to the same practical result. This testimony asserts the survival of personality, evolving in freedom, achievement, and service, and rising to clearer and clearer understanding of the mystery of God; therefore, either a whole or a half-belief in the evidence, would, through renewed sense of the dignity of the soul, reconsecrate all present endeavor.

The intensity with which we are studying the nature of our mortality and of our immortality will increase with our growing sense of obligation to the armies that defend us. That obligation will change from a diffused impulse to a definite responsibility to the future, pressing upon each one of us. Which of us this very day who passes a khaki-clad boy can help

thinking, He is ready to die for me — or me — or me? Just a happy-go-lucky lad, but in an instant ready to give himself to torture to keep me here, safe and in comfort! How many of us go about our humdrum tasks uninspired? If the mere thought of the sacrifice coerces us to nobler endeavor, how must the aggregate obligation in millions of homes defended, affect the future? Already we hold our lives in fief to unknown boys of Belgium, France, England, and now our own children sail away to save us. There is no one to-day who has a right to walk as if death were not fronting unnumbered hearts. How can we pay our debt to the dead and the dedicated?

We have to-day a duty more urgent than we ever knew before both to the boys who have died, and to the boys who are ready to die for us. We no longer belong to ourselves, but to them. Unescapably, the young men dead will affect the after history of every country for which they have died, according to the attitude toward their loss that the majority of their

countrymen shall take: whether that attitude be revenge, the purpose to exact other lives for theirs; or gross reckoning of profits, so many soldiers slain, so much commercial advantage for their nation; or the aspiration to accomplish upon earth the ideals they died for.

To convert our shuddering into service should be the purpose of all our life still before us, but we must not, in larger outlook, forget the immediate future, nor our immediate duty to our own fighters in a war not yet won. Our debt due to those who offer themselves to the slaughter is not alone for their renunciation of earth, their mere dying, as for the torture that must accompany it. Never did soldiers go so steadfastly to such sure agony as to-day our boys in all our camps are facing. They have read the newspapers for four years. We stay-at-homes may laud the glory of war in the old fashion, but the boys know better. "V.C.'s be hanged!" cries Harold Chapin, himself intrepid unto the end. There is no glamour to-day, nothing but horror that our young

soldiers see, grim, unfaltering. But look at them! There is something splendid in their faces, but youth has gone out of their eyes forever. It is well that we should understand better the nature of trench suffering, because our first duty to the future is to offer what help we may in those specific trials the trenches find it hardest to endure. War records reveal these clearly enough, and should be our chief illumination. Surely we can listen without censure, we, the safe and snug, when men of imperishable bravery drop for an instant their high reserve, and cry out against the torment of the duty they have undertaken.

The soldier annalists protest, not against the pain that affects their bodies, but against forces they feel disintegrating their souls. There is a conspicuous difference between those writers who died after but a few months of war and those that endured years of it. It is these last who have to combat their bitterness at their degradation. One may note the contrast, say, between Alan Seeger and Henri

Barbusse. Of soul-suffering, men feel profoundly the deadly ennui, the prolonged abnormality of the battle-field. People who think to stimulate the soldier's courage by constantly holding out the prospect of a long war are singularly ignorant of the reactions revealed by trench autobiography. "When will this horror end?" is the cry from page after page. Every speech by every statesman who clarifies war aims, thus promising a definite conclusion, has profound encouragement for the fighter. More than to any other class, we owe our soldiers the constant restatement of the high purpose for which they struggle.

We send our soldier forth to the degradation of murder; we owe him the noblest motive. Let him slay as executioner, not as assassin. The crimes he goes forward to stop are so monstrous that there is no taint of Pharisaism in assuming the attitude of the instrument of justice. Let our boys kill as the executioner kills, without personal bitterness, for the sake of the safety of those helpless before violence.

To slay a slayer a man need not lose his soul. No one has realized more clearly than Gilbert Murray the duty of the home-keeping army to the army in the field, and his comment on killing is worth remembering:—

“Do you remember how Sir Francis Drake once had to hang one of his officers, and how before executing the sentence he passed some time in prayer, and then shook hands with the offender? That is the sort of spirit, perhaps the only sort of spirit, in which any man of conscience can without inward misery approach the killing and torturing of his fellow creatures. The slaying of men, if you do it for the right motive, may be a high and austere duty.”

The soldier's revulsion against killing is one of the haunting impressions received from trench memoirs. It is noteworthy that this revulsion receives intense expression from two soldiers of the Central Powers, the German Deserter and Fritz Kreisler. It is not fear of death, the Great Release, that troubles the fighter,

it is the conquering of his fear of killing that comprises his transcendent courage. This is something that we, concentrating our attention on the glory of meeting death unflinchingly, too often forget, and yet, if our resolutions for the future are to be forged firm beyond all breaking, we cannot share too deeply all the sufferings over there that should consecrate us over here. We should remember that men of unimpeachable courage exclaim, as does Arthur Heath, "These are days when men should be born without mothers!" The finer the man, the more he recoils before his first bayonet thrust, and even more at the primitive blood-lust it rouses in him. Can we ever estimate the cost of killing to men whose lives had been devoted to the saving and bettering of the lives of their fellows? Donald Hankey gives the truth without faltering: "You who sit at home and read of glorious bayonet charges do not realize what it means to the man behind the bayonet. You don't realize the repugnance of the first thrust — a repugnance which has got to

be overcome. You don't realize the change that comes over a man when his bayonet is wet with the blood of his first enemy. He sees red."

The revulsion of the French artist increases with experience from his first protest, "Never will there be enough glory to cover all this blood and mud," to his agony at the indignity of having to be a human being, with a human being's tragic distinction of being forced to kill.

"You cannot conceive, my precious mother, what man can do to man."

"All of us deplore this infamous war, but the experience of most is that the performing of a horrible duty is the only thing that can excuse the hideous necessity of being a man."

"The other day, before the noble stretch of this countryside spread out to the spring, I recalled the delight I once had merely in being a man — and now, to be a man —!"

All trench revelations show the reader ever more clearly that it is not his life that any soldier trembles to lose, but other pos-

sessions. Every sensitive man who enters the trenches knows the menace to his sanity. Worse than the loss of his friends is watching them go mad. The horrors of this war unhinge the brain. The men who enter it know that they risk the madhouse. But deeper than the degradation of murder and of madness is a subtler, sadder one, the peril of disillusion. The utter abnormality, the hopeless ennui of prolonged fighting, cause despair. That is the most hideous wound that a man may endure. Of all the duties we, the safe, owe to the soldiers for the nature of their sacrifice, the most imperative is to relieve this depression. Few passages of trench testimony are more tragic than the following arraignment of civilians by a private who had fought steadfastly for month after month:—

“Of your soldier’s internal life, the constant collision of contradictory moral standards, the liability of the soul to be crushed by mechanical monotony, the sensation of taking a profitless part in a game played by monkeys and organized by lunatics, you realize, I think, nothing. . . . They carry

their burden with little help from you. For when men work in the presence of death, they cannot be satisfied with conventional justifications of a sacrifice which seems to the poor weakness of our flesh intolerable. They hunger for an assurance which is absolute, for a revelation of the spirit as poignant and unmistakable as the weariness of their suffering bodies. . . . To most of us it must come from you or not at all. For an army does not live by munitions, but also by fellowship in a moral idea or purpose."

Pulsing atoms in a maelstrom of horror, our soldiers may lose the vision that leads them dauntless toward death; we, to save whom they suffer, owe them their own inspiration. Quiet at home, and purged by our thought of their peril, cannot we keep their own vision clear to them? Cannot we find a way by our words, by our attitude, to make plain to them our oneness with their purpose? We at home, they in the field, dedicate our lives to the rebuilding of the world. But as they fall, thousand after thousand, of our bravest and most beautiful, can we, broken by mourning, keep our

endeavor unfaltering? A flaming radiance has led our boys beyond all battle, but without them are we not left too blind and weak for the great remaking?

We may well falter before our task, we who remain, middle-aged, or old, incapable now of youth's fire, youth's rebound, we who are in a hundred ways enslaved to the old world's views and practices, that old world proved moribund. In our doubt of our power to build indestructibly for the future, we must remember that we do not advance unassisted. Two companies of young idealists show us the way. One of these companies has passed beyond all combat, but has left us both words and devotion to give us explicit inspiration for the vast rebuilding. These met death believing it the gate of an upward path. Their every attitude has revealed their conviction that death does not close, but opens. Should it have cost millions of lives to teach us that? At whatever cost, the life either of man or nation makes no sure advance until it believes death a gate. But what if we accept the sacrifice, and still preserve our old doubt of

immortality? From the millions of bereaved homes the answer rings, "We must believe! They knew they were to live! It is desecration of their memories to doubt their creed!"

We cannot, if we would, deny the faith to which their intuition testified. It is possible, perhaps, to deny it full credence; it is impossible to deny the action responsive to their belief. Whether we believe or not, we who loved them must act as if we believed, we should be so hideously separated from them if we did not! They mingle with our every purpose, they affect our every moment. Never was the world so coerced by its dead. Wasted, the boys of this war! They are the strongest influence alive to-day, and for to-morrow! If they had lived, we might never have known them, but dead, they are forever revealed.

We face the future knowing of it only this, that it is not ours, but theirs. Our obligation to build it out of their ideals of service, of immortality, of God, is inexorable. Hecatombs of splendid men, tossed to the cannon on every day of this agony, lives poured forth as if human beauty were

cheap as ditch-water! Shall such sacrifice be wasted? Ours fearlessly to apply to the morrow all that the new intimacy with death reveals to the men who face it, all that the new grief will reveal to us who practice its energy. More and more must the vast impulse of vast mourning be directed and clarified and focused. And those who shall best help us in this effort comprise the second group of young idealists, those soldiers who shall return to us, wounded or whole, but strangely enlightened.

Men, however young, however crude, who have for months passed every moment under the eyes of death, will not come back to us ignorant as they went. They cannot fail to have gained new social wisdom, and a bravery to embody it in practice to which the old hesitations in civic improvement and initiative will seem an amusing cowardice. Facing death, they have discovered secrets of man-soul and of God-soul that we cannot know. They have shared the vision and the actions of those who have passed on; it is by mere accident that they themselves survive, and return to us. Less and less in

the future shall we instruct our young men, for they have lived and dared more than we can know. This war is not like former wars that often let loose upon a comfortable world the wild unrest of an army made degenerate by abnormal living. The battle of to-day is of civilization against cruelty. The men who have fought in this crusade will bring back with them the power of their dedication. He is blind who dares prophesy any characteristics of the after-the-war world without reckoning with the armies that will come home, consecrated to the "Carry on" enjoined by comrades gone, and intrepid for the innovations due a new faith in God and in man.

We can divine a little of the purposes of these men by studying the words of their companions who have passed on. The constant parallelism of battle memoirs forces one to believe that the writers are merely articulate for the hopes of the masses, living and dead, who act, but do not speak, but whose influence at home will in future both speak and act. Some reforms that soldier motives may establish are revealed

both by the soldiers themselves, and by grief-enlightened members of home ranks, who look to their young crusaders for guidance. This humility of age toward the inspiration of youth is clear in many a writer of England and of France, but is still too recent an attitude to have affected our inexperience. Men who have given their lives and men who have risked them shall be the holy fellowship to illumine the great reconstruction. These men learned all their wisdom through a revaluing of life by the presence of death. On the battle-field they learned that they were immortal — can those who return readily forget? These are the men to whose risk we owe a debt to be paid in terms of coöperation. With them we are bound by the spirit of "Carry on." Yet we must analyze our obligation or it may be impotently expended. We owe our boys the remaking of the world, but we should look to soldier testimony to see in what respects they desire its reform.

In the new world now issuing, some old things will be absent, some new things will

be emergent. Under the influence of the soldiers dead and surviving who have fought to the uttermost, shall war still be accepted as an arbiter? We talk of armament and disarmament, universal service and much else, without questioning what the men who must do the fighting will have to say about all this. Perhaps there are no more whole-hearted militarists alive to-day than the men of the sixties: what has happened in the intervening years both to man and to war that the opinions of the young men of to-day, whose bravery has been proved beyond question, almost beyond conception, should be at variance with those of an older generation? The distinction cannot be too clearly made between what the young soldiers of to-day think of this war, and what they think of war in general. Newspapers at home may ridicule as fantastically idealistic the idea of this as the last war, but what are the boys of England, France, Italy, America, giving their lives for except that this shall be the last war? To conquer an enemy who would make war the law of nations, to free the men to come

from the torment they themselves elect to suffer, are the motives that to-day carry men to the guns. One cannot read the "German Deserter" and "Under Fire" and not be consciously equally in the French and in the German transcript from life of the mighty resolution of the common soldier never to let war recur. In both books one sees that as men fight on, month by month, year by year, the entire force of their being is focused into the overmastering desire to end warfare. One thing is clearly promised for the future, at the cost of whatever renovation of governmental responsibility: henceforth the men who fight will be the men who decide for or against the waging of war. One cannot read the "German Deserter" and doubt, even in Germany, the coming control of war-making by the proletariat.

The soldier's reaction to battle as shown in his writings is, of course, complex. It would seem that the testimony of those who have been longest under the strain should be considered more valuable than the first glad brief impulse to adventure. Undoubtedly many a man has found him-

self in the trenches, and rejoiced in the discovery, but it is never the man who had the ability to find himself before. To such heroes as Harold Chapin, Raymond Lodge, Ferdinand Belmont, Tom Kettle, war is not a matter of stimulating adventure, but of terrible duty. The soldier of to-day is as clear that this war is right as being war on war, as he is that war itself should at whatever price be wiped from the world. Kettle's ringing words cry to us from that battle which was to be his last: "If I live I mean to spend the rest of my life working for perpetual peace. I have seen war and I know what an outrage it is against simple men"; and these others to the full significance of which we may well give deep attention: "Unless you hate war, as such, you cannot really hate Prussia. If you admit war as an essential part of civilization, then what you are hating is merely Prussian efficiency." The man who is giving his body to the shells protests against the shallow pretense that war is in itself educative in heroism. He admits that high motive may consecrate slaughter, but in-

sists that war is in itself bestial. He is ready to die, but he is not ready to deny this distinction. The following is a rookie's thoughtful analysis of his reactions, establishing a fundamental truth, contributing like much other evidence to show that our young men have clearer views for the reconstruction than we of the old order: —

“No, to submit to this war business means a sacrifice, temporary, at least, and for some of us final, of the finest things that all evolution has produced; and the sacrifice is a hideous one, sickening, terrible. It is lightened only by the faith that it is a temporary one and necessary; made excusable only by the hope of thus safeguarding and creating a greater opportunity for precisely such cultural development in the future. But let it never be glorified for its own sake, on the ground that it has displaced a lesser order. In spite of the fine stoicism, the cool and ardent courage, the patient and reckless faith it has produced, it is essentially a stimulus of a lower, less imaginative, less vital sort than the less

unified but more pregnant appeals of a peace culture."

Another young American voices the protest of the drafted man against the creation of a large permanent army, and of a system of universal service as being essentially opposed to the very policy which made our acceptance of conscription so ready. He says of this proposed increase: "In looking for a 'next great war' it is hostile to the administration and to the spirit in which America has entered the present conflict. Our valid aim is not that of national conquest nor simply of German subjugation, but the creation of a more enduring international peace — one that shall make for a reduction, not an increase, of armament. The proposal of the Army League presupposes that our aims in the present war are futile."

The innermost motiving of the soldier's revulsion toward war as united to his dedication to this crusade, is the same as divides the principles of the Allies from the principles of the Central Powers. The Allied soldier fights because he believes war

wrong, the German because he believes it right, and the essential difference between the two is in their creeds of death. If death is extinction, then force is the law for a material world; if death is a portal, then kindness is the law for a spiritual world. The soldier's views, therefore, of war in general, and of this particular war, are essentially inherent in his perception that if death is a portal, then earth-existence is a vestibule of development that no one has a right to desecrate or curtail. However blind and inarticulate, the faith of our soldiers conceives this war as a war of spirit against matter, between men who believe in the survival of the fittest of spiritual attainment, and men who believe in the survival of the fittest of material achievement. All the varieties of cruelty that the German soul has exhibited can be traced to its creed of death, to thinking that men perish both as an earthly influence and as personal entities beyond the grave. The Germans hold that if they killed every Belgian, the Belgians would be dead. For so learned a nation, this belief argues a strange igno-

rance of history — are the Greeks of Thermopylæ dead? The new world we are to construct must not make so impractical a mistake, it must not fail to reckon with the presence of the dead.

The soldier of to-day, however revolted by war, recognizes the full value of army life. There is not a record that fails to appreciate the educational value for himself and for his companions. One cannot read trench testimony and not realize what a thoughtful being is the soldier of the present. One wonders if so much concentrated thinking was ever done as is now being done in the battle-lines. Even the humblest memoirs are as illuminating as they are laconic. Donald Hankey, always both the subtlest and the sanest analyst of soldier psychology, discusses the evils and the benefits of military training in two summaries, in which the good far outweighs the evil. If the highest ideals now being shaped in the trenches can be used to inspire the emergent future, one of their finest results will be introducing into civilian existence the

inspiration hitherto allowed only to army life. The enlisted man is swept to high enthusiasm as he tests the worth of discipline, of democracy, of comradeship in purpose and in mutual helpfulness, but he turns to us in ironic protest that to obtain these benefits he is forced to go forth and kill his fellow man. The call of war to the volunteer is as complex as it is noble; the impulse of the individual to abandon himself to a directing destiny, the testing of self against hardship, the grapple with unknown adventure, the sense of being part of the solidarity of a great coöperative effort, the testifying, by the light tossing of one's life to the flame, that spirit is more valuable than body. These are the motives of war's compulsion to youth. But has peace become so gross a condition that it could not hold all these motives of inspiration? Only because the conditions of peace have become so materialistic, could war have seemed by contrast spiritualizing; with all its brutalities, more enfranchising to the soul than peace. But is not this decay of the opportunities of peace due to the old material-

istic views of death that this war with its prodigal destruction has annulled? The war has brought into being a new regard for death that effects a new regard for life. The more sacredly we regard the potentialities of peace, the more they will reveal their opportunities for that self-abandonment to service which is the essential attraction of war. Our soldiers know how light a thing is dying, but how terrible a thing is killing; and with this knowledge they will try to incorporate into civil life the high devotion of the army. The only real death is the destructive frenzy of mutual murder, and the only life that can combat such death is that which offers as much mass enthusiasm toward saving and beautifying the existence of the mass as is now bent on destroying it. The passionate desire to give one's life for an ideal, for a community conception like patriotism, is as far as we have yet attained. In the Great Reconstruction we shall follow the glamour of heroic living where we now perceive only the glamour of heroic dying.

One of the ideals that the returning soldier will surely bring back with him is his enthusiasm for democracy. The dignity of democracy is so far the most salient social result of the war. There is not a soldier-writer who does not confess himself humbled and inspired by contact with men with whom only war could have associated him. Oxonian and cockney, Parisian *littérateur* and Breton fisher-lad, plutocrat and pauper, are all tossed together into the fiery melting pot. In mutual revelation, in mutual surprise, in the sheer vistas of democratic comradeship, the soldiers forget the tragic cause that alone could bring about this joyous association. Friendships are formed that in peace-times would have seemed grotesque. Victor Chapman's portraits of the Foreign Legion make cut-throats and criminals so human that we become as unconscious as the author that these are the sympathetic pen-sketches of a young American millionaire. Educated men writing from the battle-line acknowledge their debt of inspiration to their humblest messmates, and their tone proves

them as unconscious of the benefit they themselves bestow, as are the inarticulate heroes inspiring them. The sympathy cemented in camp cannot be afterwards severed. If mere school or fraternity association becomes a lifelong bond, how much more powerful must be the fellowship founded on fighting together under rain of fire! Pauper and millionaire have warded death from each other, sharing thoughts and actions made utterly sincere by the clean presence of destruction. Can they, returned home, ever contend with the old animosity? A man you have shielded from death is dear to you forever. For the indestructible understanding thus established, we who gaze into the future may give thanks, for of all signs of the times no trend is more obvious than that of syndicalism. No one can escape the fear that the war of nations may be followed by a war of classes. The leveling comradeship of the army, the affection of man for man where purse and privilege are nothing, may be the strongest influence to secure the new world from the menace of class bitter-

ness, and to show the ideals common to rich and poor, educated and ignorant.

Democratic kindliness is not the only democratic principle taught in the trenches. There is born there a new sense of the responsibility of the individual to his nation and to his neighbor. In a massed comradeship of millions, a man offers himself for ideals he had hardly guessed he owned, and at the same moment he would risk his last breath to succor his comrade. This twofold responsibility lifting the soldier out of the personal into the eternal is the glory of the army, but is it not exactly the glory that the army itself is beginning to see should belong to civilian life, and not merely to military? A man on leave from one of our camps in the spring of 1917, at the time when the obstructionists in Congress were doing their best to nullify the devotion of our volunteers, said that his strongest impression was the purpose of enlisted men, when they returned, to reform governmental machinery.

In every aspect of the reconstruction one can see the vivifying force of the New

Death. Every department of existence is being tested by the presence of death. It has become the great cleanser and clarifier of all our purposes, private and public; as a recent newspaper poem expresses it: —

“O blessed War,
That sends a blast of brightness from the grave
To show the souls of mortals as they are.”

Fighting men who have risked their lives for an ideal, fathers who have offered sons for that same ideal of democracy, can never again vote carelessly for office-holders whose principles, with those of their constituents, control the keys of life and death for whole battalions of splendid youth. There is for the future a force for democratic control of government that is incalculable. Not even in Germany will it ever again be possible for men to send others blindly to war, or themselves blindly to go.

The impetus to democracy is unescapably an impetus to internationalism as well. The new inspiration of democracy is a readjustment of emphasis. Before the war, we talked of the rights of the indi-

vidual; through the war, we have come to emphasize the responsibilities of the individual. You cannot construct statecraft on the twin principles of individual right and individual responsibility, and at the same time think or act as if these principles of justice stopped short at the frontier. You are impelled to practice the same consideration for the neighbor across the border, as for the one within it. The chauvinism of the press in all the belligerent nations is oddly at variance with the toleration of the trenches. Soldiers have never been nursers of hatred. The long after-bitterness of our own Civil War was due to those who had not fought it; it is the soldiers of both sides who have done more than any one to heal the wounds they caused. Some analogous influence will help in the great international healing. It is the fighters who will have most influence on international relations.

One must never forget the new force of the association of races characteristic of the Allied armies. For the most ignorant soldier of every army, there must necessa-

rily be a new knowledge of distant peoples. He knows now that the people of India, Africa, Asia, are living men. He has seen them die and suffer. Their needs at an international tribunal can never again be quite alien to him. He has acquired not only actual data in regard to specific strangers, but a new openness, a new hospitality of ideas, in regard to the rights of unknown races. For him, in future, the foreigner as such has rights as such.

Soldier records are as clean of hatred for the enemy as home newspapers are full of it. Proof of this is unavoidable, absolute. Donald Hankey tells us how the Tommy is sympathetic with Fritz, "who wants to get back home same as us." The "German Deserter" is pitiful of the Belgians; Kreisler reveals the genuine friendliness of Russian and Austrian; Frenchman and German are merged in the same hopeless mire in the last terrible picture in "Under Fire." Personal ferocity toward the enemy is not the natural attitude of the soldier. It is engendered only by evidence of personal brutality on the part of the foe. Wanton

cruelty makes the fighter see red, but this motive is not hatred of nation for nation, but hatred of cruelty, hatred of hate. The last place to look for a mutual animosity hostile to an international federation will be in the opposing armies. Just as class distinctions have been leveled in each army by sharing the expectation of death, so national hostilities have for the soldier been softened by that presence common to both battle-lines. Death has been too pitiless on both sides that the soldiers should not be the first men to teach how to forgive.

Not alone in practice of sympathy is internationalism being forged in the trenches; it is the clear avowed belief of many a man. Socialism is to-day a power so widespread as to be incalculable. Socialism is as active in the trenches as in other places, and internationalism is its fundamental tenet. Barbusse, proclaiming Liebknecht the greatest hero of this epoch, the "German Deserter," hotly asserting the rights of the people his army oppresses, utter the burning passion of socialism. The French painter declares that after the war

each man who has fulfilled his duty to his country will have before him a new duty to the world-state. "This new state will not be established without blows, despoilings, disputes, for an indefinite period, but without doubt, a door is even now opening upon a new horizon." He conceives responsibility to the world-state as following upon one's responsibility to the nation. Duty to others is progressive — obligation to family, community, nation, world. Advance is retarded if any one of these duties is put out of sequence or exaggerated. At present the soldier has a clearer conception of internationalism than has the civilian, who fails to see its inevitable place in the solidarity of a man's obligations. No man is fit to perform his duty to his community who has not first performed his duty to his family; no man is fit to perform his duty to his country who has not first performed his duty to his community; but no man capable of the noblest devotion to his country can be indifferent to the world beyond its borders. That internationalism has for its firmest foundation

a white-hot patriotism can be instantly proved by reference to the soldier supporters of a world-federation, such as Kettle, Hankey, Belmont, and unnumbered others. Many a man reveals that the German challenge is for him a challenge to his very humanity, for his protection not only of his country, but of all civilization. In a book whose vision and devotion should inspire the vision and devotion of his fellow Americans, Edwin Abbey writes of the impulses that made him a volunteer:—

“It was good to hear from you and your feeling about the Lusitania. The dishonor to the flag is great, but it seems to me more a dishonor to manhood and humanity. I can see very little patriotism or flags or country; it is more a struggle of mankind to defend the principles of humanity and chivalry which the Creator has handed down. No country or flag can be mine except the United States, but if I could go to this war as a citizen of the world, I would pray to be allowed.”

This verse of a Canadian major expresses

that clear world-hope to be found in all soldier testimony: —

“Bright is the path that is opening before us,
Upward and onward it mounts through the night,
Sword shall not sever the bonds that unite us,
Leading the world to the fullness of light.”

It is not enough for the soldier to fight only for his own country, but for other countries also. We are prone to undervalue the inspiration of our fighting men and of the mothers and fathers who speed them on their way. We are prone also to forget that American soldiers have had more time to think and weigh their motives than have those of any other nation. Four years of watching have removed from war all its spell for the imagination. The principles at stake stand out grimly for a man's choice: might or right, which? spirituality or savagery, which? Ours, more than any army before, is influenced by intellect rather than by emotion; rendered thus thoughtful, our soldiers demand full value for the life they offer. That priceless thing, human existence, must be given for humanity. We

demand highest sacrifice for highest service. At home and in the field we are ready to endure to the last blood-drop for the sake of our fellow man, for a future that will prove our faith in each man's freedom. Internationalism is a word taboo in our noisy newspapers. It is not taboo in our President's messages, it is not taboo in a soldier's ideals. It is the most powerful aspiration in both, as well as the strongest purpose to hold steadfast millions of humble men and women who give their loved ones to the fire. Perhaps some of us never knew how passionately we loved our land until we conceived its mission to the world. Death, become a familiar presence in every imagination, clears all vision, making us see patriotism in a new radiance. That nation of the world that is ready to sacrifice most for the other nations shall attain the highest patriotism. Our armies who go forth to fight, our armies who wait at home, ask one deathless battle-call to courage — America first in service!

We are strangely blind if we do not

perceive that an international conscience would make, not against, but for, national development. The men who are living in the momentary nearness of death, daily seeing their friends blown to atoms, are reëxamining patriotism, as well as other emotions. Seeing evidence on every side that spirit outweighs matter, overwhelmed by their intuition that a man's soul outlives his body, both as earthly influence and as immortal entity, they are conceiving national distinctions as changed for the future, not in intensity, but in kind. Superiority of nation to nation is seen to depend on spiritual, not material, valuations. The British hesitation before reprisals was a patriotic reluctance to relinquish a spiritual contention for a physical one. A world-federation following this period of passionate patriotism, would guarantee each nation physical freedom, while it would pour into purely spiritual channels the present flood-tide of devotion to country. The result would be such an enhancing of national individuality, such intensive patriotism, as history has

never seen. This is the sort of patriotism for which the armies of the Allies are ready to die, this is the patriotism with which they will return home.

In no country are politicians as yet awake to the leavening force of the idealism of the masses. It is a strange anomaly that in America many men who conceive themselves as authorities on patriotism are least aware of the demands made by the new popular vision, while the man whom the nation as a whole has put in authority, perceives and interprets the new perception more clearly than any other Allied statesman. That in every country the common people accept his messages with incalculable enthusiasm has a significance that reactionaries would do well to heed. In every land the suffering populace is demanding surer spiritual vision of those whom it delegates to govern. It may well seem for a while a topsy-turvy world in which idealism shall perhaps become the fashion. This is no fantastic foreshadowing; all sorts of di-

vinations, aspirations, spiritual developments will necessarily affect the structure of government, in an era when universal ruin, removing every accustomed prop, has forced men in the trenches and men at home to act on the hypothesis of an immortality and a God. To know there is a new adjustment to dying needs only a little self-examination. Before 1914 how many of us really believed in immortality? Perhaps we thought we did, perhaps we knew we did not, but how much of private or public life took any real account of survival? Or even really wanted to? It seemed more than a little superstitious to believe in immortality. It still seems so to many people. These do not perceive their own minority, nor the profundity of the popular resolve that the new world shall not be constructed on the old materialist basis. And yet five years ago what other test was ever applied to the projects of statesman or of individual than the test of material advantage for the nation or the man? We called such tests practical; to-day we are gazing at

to-morrow, querying whether spiritual forces are not the most practical that exist; the utter vanity of our old standards has been too practically proved! The world before the war had no greater need than a creed of death that tended toward permanence rather than toward decadence.

Whether or not the hypothesis of an eternal evolution for the soul is true, the most agnostic could not deny that no motive of effort could so much contribute toward ennobling government policies. One cannot readily conjecture the novel channels of human enterprise if even for a few generations plain people are going to believe in a life after death. If in this supreme struggle, that side wins which believes soul more enduring than body, then the greater victories of the Great Peace will be victories still of spirit over matter. To our slogan, Democracy, a faith in survival gives definite support in its stress on equality and on the value of each individual soul. The effort of each person who shares to-day's vast popular intuition will be a motive to permeate every

department of life, political and economic even more than what we narrowly term religious. Once before, an age that had neglected death, as we had neglected it, was remade by the doctrine of immortality. Once again in human history death, the disregarded, has come into its own, sweeping all pride from us, but clarifying our political vision by a new reverence for the human soul, by a new consciousness of God. A writer of to-day analyzes the changes in pagan statecraft due to the Christian creed: "This change in content and direction of conduct, was accomplished by its doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Usually this fact is assumed to represent a purely religious conception with no political importance whatever. But it was in fact the profoundest political force in history."

One can hardly fail to be startled by the new strange admission by statesmen to-day of purely spiritual ideals, of purposes openly cognizant of an immortal destiny with which all aspiration, to become permanent, must harmonize. Presi-

dent Wilson's faith is outspoken. Four years ago we should have been embarrassed by such frank belief in God and in eternity as is now received with enthusiasm. This enthusiasm is partly the result of German challenge; it is the return to a Christianity we had forgotten we possessed until it was contrasted with the German creed of a tribal God, a deity for other nations long outgrown and legendary. The Kaiser's impious prayers have revealed the distinction between Teutonic morality and ours, the first founded on the pagan conception of the debt of the weak to the strong, the second founded on the Christian conception of the debt of the strong to the weak. The New Death demands of the new statesmanship further vision; for with eternity before us we can afford to be patient with projects planned to benefit far generations; and it demands the testing of all statecraft not by material, but by moral, standards, for, forced to faith, we adventure the guess that God is perhaps the securest foundation for government.

In the ebb and flow that govern all spiritual advance, lethargy and indifference may again dull our present intuitions, but for a while at least the future promises a renaissance of religion. The vital quality in the creed of the New Death is that it is frankly evolutionary rather than absolute. It takes God and immortality for instant experiment to help overwhelming agony, which, if it but advance the human spirit one step toward the divine, is a light price to pay. Events move so swiftly that only instinct, not logic, is swift enough to meet them. Contemplation is impossible when a creed must be instantly transmuted into act. Our boys, like ourselves, blinded and agonized, have turned in certainty to God and immortality. For us also these seem the only props. The religion of the future cannot fail to be frankly mystic. The grapple with naked horror has forced us to employ spiritual powers and muscles that science had long forbidden us to trust. It no longer seems beneath our dignity to admit that we can feel God

near us. We know that if we had not felt Him we should have been unselfed by despair. In the smuggest days of science we depended on our intuitions far more than we knew; if we had not, would they not have decayed beyond supporting us to-day?

The more we put in practice the resilience of the New Death, which is a vast recuperative instinct rather than an argued faith, — that is, the more we practice the hypothesis of immortality, — the more we shall believe it. The relation of conviction and action is as much matter of psychology as of religion. You cannot reach complete conviction abstractly; you must act it before your brain can give full assent. First do, then understand, is a psychological sequence. It is safe to trust our mysticism in a period redeemed from all peril of rhapsody by its instant need of energy. Thus safeguarded, the mere employment of our spiritual faculties may develop them in ways not to be foreseen. One cannot prophesy to what new spiritual vision a faith

confidently developed, but constantly embodied in conduct, may attain.

The whole world is to-day breathless before some Purposer directing the ghastly battle. Palpitant with expectancy, the religion of the New Death accepts God, but without daring to dictate to him His manner of proving Himself. Nor can the urgent practicality of faith to-day take time to formulate creed or ritual. Probably many, needing the support of demonstration, will turn with new reverence to old forms, but without any bitterness toward those who differ from them in external practice. Jew and Catholic have ministered side by side in the trenches.

In medieval times faith expressed itself in cathedrals, embodied its aspiration in architecture, in painting. To-day it has been overwhelmingly impressed upon us how perishable are all human monuments, and yet how imperishable is human character. The new religion will try to express itself, as indeed long before the war it had begun to do, in purely moral

performance, not in cathedrals for men's worship, but in opportunities for their improvement. It will see that social service is an achievement that endures while stone and marble may be in an instant made dust. As we feel our way into the future, one thing we ever hold fast: the new world must be in every department composed of indestructible elements. The war has proved that spirit alone is indestructible.

In its attitude toward the Christian creed the religion of the immediate future promises to incorporate into society the principles of Christianity in a franker way than ever before, copying the character of Christ, rather than insisting on the actual worship of his person. This is merely a readjustment of emphasis. The articles of faith revealed in many a soldier creed are principles inaugurated in Nazareth for the undoing of heathendom: democracy; human brotherhood; the responsibility of the strong to the weak; the superiority of moral to material standards; a supreme instinctive trust in a divine

being; faith that the soul survives; — all these principles were set in motion by Jesus, but had become obscured, and yet beneath all our materialism have remained powerful enough to sway the battle of to-day. This is perhaps the last physical battle of Christian against pagan force. Few soldiers of the Allied armies would recognize themselves as Christian martyrs, yet they fall, as did the early Christians, to assert the rights of humanity against the despotism of the State.

One cannot say whether the religion to come will clearly label itself Christian, although there are thoughtful men who think so, as, for example, Sir Oliver Lodge:—

“Those who think that the day of the Messiah is over are strangely mistaken; it has hardly begun. In individual souls Christianity has flourished and borne fruit, but for the ills of the world itself it is an almost untried panacea. It will be strange if this ghastly war fosters and simplifies and improves a knowledge of Christ, and aids a perception of the in-

effable beauty of his life and teaching; yet stranger things have happened; and whatever the Church may do, I believe that the call of Christ himself will be heard and attended to by a large part of humanity in the near future, as never yet has it been heard and attended to on earth."

As far as trench records indicate the tendency toward the rehabilitation of the Christian creed, one observes, in support, Donald Hankey's testimony, and that of many others, to the common soldier's respect for the character of Christ, and also in support the beautiful re-created Catholicism of the Irishman, Tom Kettle, of the Frenchman, Ferdinand Belmont, while against it one notes, for example, the splendid pantheism of the French painter, the utter confidence in a directing destiny rather than personality of such men as Alan Seeger or Rupert Brooke, or the faith in the holy spirit in man, which is the sole religion of Henri Barbusse or the "German Deserter." The point of interest is that all these creeds would agree as to the practice of the Christian tenets,

all of them are ready to put to proof at once the audacities of its altruism. Perhaps the only thing that we can surely say of the religion to which the universality of death has to-day driven us is that it is profoundly mystical, and at the same time profoundly practical. The fusion of these qualities is a new spiritual force whose expression in conduct commands our attention in the days to be.

More and more, as we stake our all on our possible immortality, shall we gain that enfranchisement of the soul that can come from no other conception. The mere yielding of the imagination to so glorious a guess promises emancipation from war's havoc, from the indignity of our puniness, from the menace of bereavement. These three have been fetters fastened upon progress through the materialistic views of the old death. These three have so hampered civilization that to-day we see it dwarfed and diseased almost to its own destruction. From these fetters the New Death, by

its adjustment of our mortality to our immortality, offers freedom.

The intuitions of immortality everywhere stirring the hearts of people to-day forbid us to believe that physical dissolution has any finality. Death, we more and more suspect, is simply the exchange of one field of opportunities for another, the post-physical for the physical development of the soul, which remains itself and indestructible. The more we come to believe this, the less rational warfare will appear. The essence of war is that death is irrevocably decisive. War will cease when the influence against it becomes not religion, not humanity, but sheer common sense: when we believe no man is killable, shall we not cease to kill? It is self-destructive to try to destroy the indestructible, it is throwing yourself against a rock. We who believe in the New Death watch the battle, holding that not the conquering of Germany, but the attitude toward death is the fundamental issue. The outcome of the whole is either the reduction of armaments, with all that this

allows of energies released for enduring achievement, or increase of armaments with all that this entails of aspiration impeded and infected. To increase and improve armament is to allow the mind to become engrossed with engines of murder. The effect of such absorption is evident in the partial mortification shown by the German intellect of to-day. You cannot give all your thoughts to destroying your fellow man, and not by inexorable laws of psychology court a diseased imagination for yourself.

The more we believe that national hostilities cease abruptly at death, while the individual soul continues, — which is precisely what numberless people to-day are believing with growing intensity, — the more we shall be impelled to correlate these two post-mundane conditions with our present existence. Universal destruction, forcing upon us the hypothesis of survival, makes international brotherhood merely a logical condition to be worked for, as one would seek to bring school and college into a relation eliminat-

ing waste energy. Even the views of pacifist and militarist are not so antagonistic as they seem, both referring at bottom to their views of death. The militarist believes in giving life for an ideal, the pacifist believes in preserving life for the embodiment of that ideal, but both agree as to the superiority of the ideal; both believe spirit more valuable than body. Might one even dream that to Germany, only a little more materialistic than the rest of us who were also sodden with science, may come the most vital awakening of all? Conquered, she must see most clearly the wastage of her young life poured forth, and so, led by her mourning mothers, must turn in her agony of grief, like the rest, to immortality as the sole sustaining hope. So may she, too, find new life at the heart of destruction, and in that far-off issue, her boys, too, may, however blindly, have given their lives to set in motion the energies of the New Death. !

If even for a few generations we act on our conjecture of immortality, the

larger vision, the profounder basis of purpose, will so advance human existence as to make this war worth its price. Our accepting the finality of dissolution as a law of nature has been a blindness obstructive to progress. The history of civilization is made up of two movements, understanding of natural laws and submission to them. We do not chain the lightning; we first ascertain its laws, and then make all our inventions comply with them. Civilization has been long retarded because we have not ruled our lives in obedience to the laws of death. We have either fought them, or neglected them, we have never built either our private plans or our state-edifice frankly in accordance with them. Civilization is first a spiritual advance, and only secondarily a material one. The liberation of the soul, so that it may be free to conceive and to accomplish, is the first condition of progress, but it is a condition that has been inextricably bound by the dread of death. Our highest endeavor has been half-sur-reptitious, based on the chance escape

from the constant menace of interruption. We had flattered ourselves for a century that science was furthering human development. We know to-day how far science has put it back. Yet for our future we have learned from science the invaluable fact that all new achievement is founded on a daring manipulation of the unknown, on adventuring the applications of laws that are but half-divined. This is the essentially scientific method of discovering any truth. As soon as the falsity of a conjecture is proved by applying it, it is discarded for some new guess of better promise. Our old hypothesis of extinction has wrought ruin. It is before us, therefore, to hazard our conjecture of immortality.

Nature inexhaustibly renews her energies out of decay, in accordance with some sure discernment of what is indestructible. We shall advance our civilization when we learn to imitate the largeness of her gestures, and their confidence in some imperishable plan. The more the loss of

loved ones makes the world of to-day turn wistfully toward human survival, the more shall its mere possibility inspire our endeavor to bring all earth achievement into better connection with eternity.

There are, of course, many who may be, like medieval dreamers, rapt into contemplation of the mysterious loveliness of the life to come, but any general tendency to let mysticism undermine energy as in the Middle Ages, has probably been obviated by the period of scientific materialism that has intervened. Science has established for us the rule of experimental action as the fundamental attitude toward any speculation, psychic or physical. Greek thought undervalued the future in favor of the present, medieval thought undervalued the present in favor of the future, the nineteenth century distorted the present by denial of any future whatever. The attitude of mind now emergent has more sanity than any of these three; it puts present and future on an equality because they both contribute to spiritual evolution. It exaggerates

the importance neither of body nor of soul at the expense of the other. It is more and more acting on the creed that personality is imperishable, and possesses a mysterious upward destiny. And yet to be like the mystics of the Middle Ages preoccupied with this promise, arrogantly distributing awards and prophesying details, is in itself to deny the dignity of this destiny and of its Director. The medieval absorption with the life to come could not logically contribute to social betterment, for if heaven was the aspiration, and earth merely the purging of the soul, then reason would direct leaving earthly conditions as torturing as possible for the greater disciplining of the spirit. The simple intimacy with death on which we are now entering runs no such peril of paralysis, but is wholly stimulating to all mundane endeavor. After a century of disbelief we return to faith, not disparaging our bodily existence, but exalting it. Sir Oliver Lodge makes lucid this reverence for our mortality:—

“Whatever may be the case with ex-

ternal matter, the body itself is certainly an auxiliary so long as it is in health and strength; and it gives opportunity for the development of the soul in new and unexpected ways — ways in which but for earth life its practice would be deficient. This it is which makes calamity of too short a life.

“But let us not be over-despondent about the tragedy of the present. It may be that the concentrated training and courageous facing of fate, which in most accompanied voluntary entering into a dangerous war, compensates in intensity what it lacks in duration, and that the benefit of bodily terrestrial life is not so much lost by violent death of that kind as might at first appear. Yet even with some such assurance, the spectacle of thousands of youths in full vigor and joy of life having their earthly future violently wrenched from them, amid scenes of grim horror and nerve-racking noise and confusion, is one which cannot and ought not to be regarded with equanimity. It is a bad and unnatural trunca-

tion of an important part of each individual career, a part which might have done much to develop faculties and enlarge experience."

The New Death with its growing conviction of survival makes men loath to leave the experiences of the present until fully tested, not because the present, as materialism taught, is all, but because it is only a part, and for that very reason a passage to be explored more thoughtfully because the dignity of continuance adds a new dignity to every step of our eternal pilgrimage. If we are immortal, then more beauty, not less, attaches to our mortal sojourn. The more we believe in an eternal sequence for the soul, the more respect we shall have for its physical experience, and the less lightly we shall fling away the mysterious privileges of the flesh. The life beyond the grave may at moments entrance our imagination, but it is not on this account over-seductive, but rather it exalts our earth-life as being the complement of our after-death life; it may even be far more difficult,

therefore more challenging to the dauntless.

If we are deathless beings, then each hour on earth has a new sublimity, each moment may contain some development of our high destiny that it may be portentous to miss. The old view of our dying that made us seem to ourselves puny and ephemeral beings, tossed by chance into a brief consciousness, restricted all our free growth here and hereafter. It was essentially a maladjustment of living to dying that retarded all genuine progress. The New Death liberates us from our paralyzing puniness by its vista of each man's power to adapt his mortal course to its immortal promise.

As the new intimacy with death frees us from the fear of our own dissolution, transmuting dread into the stimulus of hope, so the New Death provides that adaptation of love to loss which transmutes bereavement into energy. Five years ago the activity of the world was conditioned on our power to forget death. Our dead lay confined in our hearts. We

hesitated to speak of them, as we should have hesitated to ask our friends to go with us to a grave, a visit that for ourselves was either a duty or a solace, but might have hurt the sensibilities of others. Such conduct was to shun death, not to accept it. It was not death that killed our loved ones; it was our manner of concealing grief, as if it were a thing unclean and painful, abnormal as disease. To-day brave grief is a sign of the soul's health. We used to hide away our loved ones from our conversation, denying them that earthly influence that is one branch of their burgeoning. To-day when millions of mothers grieve, it would be travesty to pretend that their lost sons are not their foremost thought. We cannot hide away so many dead. Their presence must enter our daily talk, must mingle with our daily tasks. At last we no longer condemn our dead to graves in a past we keep private, at last we allow them their rightful place in our present. They have become so great an army that their earthly influence cannot be buried. We know not

what dulling of our present vision the future may bring, but for a little while this earth is going frankly to hold its homes open to its dead.

The New Death is that attitude of the soul which looks both forward and back, back to the lives of the boys we have lost, forward to that immortal life they have entered. Between that past of ours, sacred to sorrow, and that eternal future sacred to expectation, lies for each of us an earth-space for endeavor illuminated equally by grief and by hope. The words and the deeds of our dead throw sure radiance upon our way. Our debt to the Great Design is to weave into the pattern both their dream and our new reverence for our own destiny. To make each moment granted us pregnant with energy because of the light shed on the physical sojourn by their death passed, and by our death to come, that is to bring into the new world a force to make death as creative as it used to be corruptive. The New Death is the perception of our mortal end as the mere portal of an eternal progres-

sion, and the immediate result is the consecration of all living. As we step into the future we test our ground now for its spiritual foundations. If our faith is to lead us where our dead boys have gone, it must be a faith built like theirs of spirit-values. On the mere guess that death is a portal is founded the resilience of the hell-rocked world to-day. It is a new illumination, a New Death, when dying can be the greatest inspiration of our every-day energy, the strongest impulse toward daily joy. If only the beauty of the vision that the tragedy has revealed can be retained a little while! For this little while has death come into its own as the great enricher, the great enhancer, of life.

This is the lesson the slain splendor of youth has taught to a moribund world. To construct a new world on the faith their words and their sacrifice attest is the sole expression permitted to our mourning, it is the sole monument beautiful enough to be their memorial.

THE END

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